PLAYBOY

HOW JAZZ SAVED HIP-HOP AGAIN

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THE ISIS NEGOTIATOR

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20 QUESTIONS: KEEGAN-MICHAEL KEY

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FOREIGN RELATIONS: A DATING SURVEY

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SPRING MOTORCYCLE GUIDE

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Kava Gorna

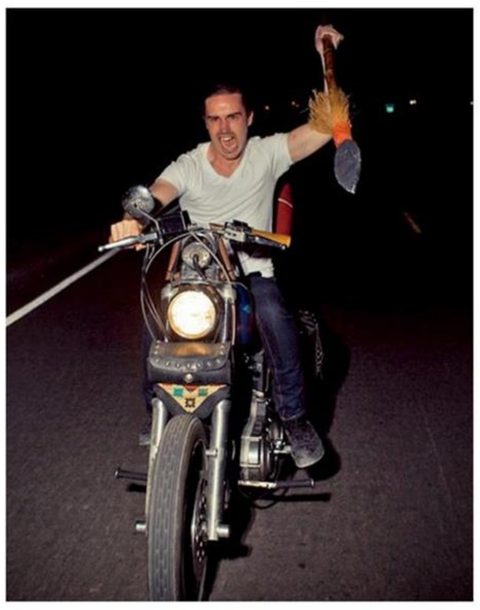
Soften your focus as you take in Gorna's portraits of model Farah Holt in *Her,* and you'll see an artist working on two levels. As the master fashion and editorial photographer plays with unabashed hallmarks of 1980s and 1990s sexuality—jean shorts, beach sunsets, skimpy bikinis—she captures a subtle femininity that exists at the edges: in a curve of the lips or a look in the eyes.

Branden Peters

In 2016, "greatest rapper alive" is a title to which Kendrick Lamar can safely lay claim. And a little-heralded South Los Angeles jazz trio, the musical force behind Lamar's album *To Pimp a Butterfly,* is largely why. Peters, an Atlanta-based rap and lifestyle journalist, journeyed to L.A. to meet the musicians and chart the long, tangled history of jazz and rap in *How Jazz Saved Hip-Hop Again.*

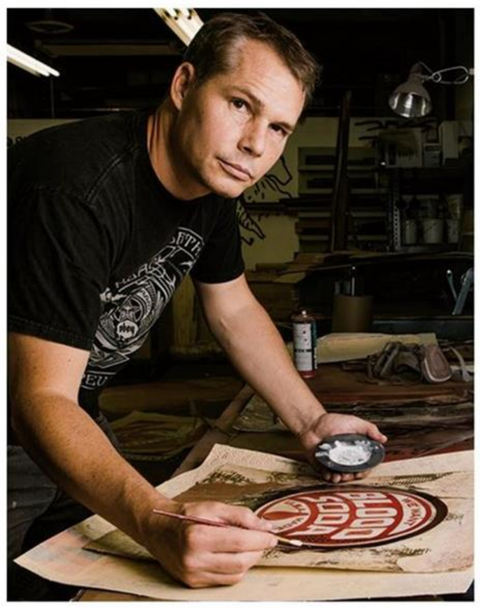
Wes Siler

Real bikers don't wear bandannas, and they don't leave their jackets at home—they buy gear that lasts a lifetime and display road scars on their sleeves. Siler brings his expertise to our *Motorcycles* pages in his primer on the retro-bike revolution and in his guide to choosing jeans, boots, jackets and helmets that look as good as they protect. It's advice to last a lifetime.



Eric Klinenberg

How do you navigate dating in a world that's in digital turmoil? Klinenberg, a New York University sociologist and co-author, with Aziz Ansari, of *Modern Romance,* should know. In *International Date Lines,* he breaks down the intricacies of internet dating around the globe, from Argentina's love of Twitter flirtation to Japan's burgeoning sexual crisis.



Shepard Fairey

It takes a giant to survey the career of another, and when it comes to this month's *Artist in Residence,* none other than Shepard Fairey could do justice to internationally acclaimed punk artist Raymond Pettibon. Fairey, of OBEY and HOPE fame, pays homage to his street-art contemporary: "His poetic imagery seduces you," he writes, "and then it cracks you over the head."

Olivia Jaffe

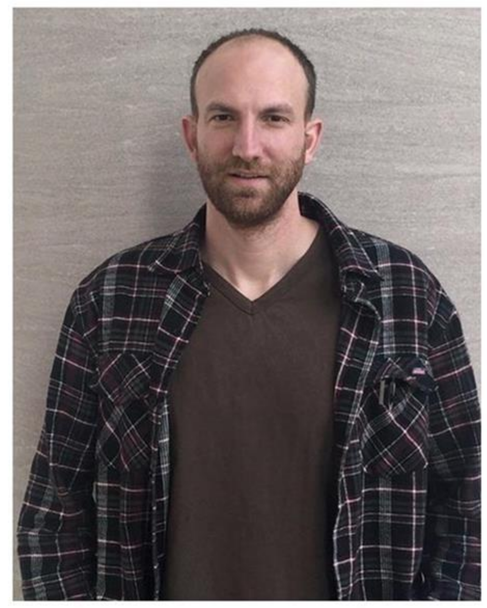
Jaffe, a gifted photographer from Los Angeles, has the uncanny ability to make her photos look weathered. In fact, they look lifted straight from the 1970s, both in process (shot almost exclusively on film) and spirit. Lucky for us, she's obsessed with PLAYBOY; the impeccably old-school atmosphere that permeates *How Jazz Saved Hip-Hop Again* is all thanks to her.

Sarah A. Topol

A kidnapping-and-ransom negotiator's tools are money, empathy and time, all of which mean nothing to ISIS, making a would-be rescuer's job that much harder. In *To Deal With the Devil,* Topol, a veteran war reporter, takes us to the Syrian border to follow an operative as he races to recover a group of journalists held hostage before things turn deadly.

Luke Mogelson

After three years as a foreign correspondent in Afghanistan, Mogelson, a National Magazine Award winner and former National Guard medic, decided to turn from journalism to fiction. His experiences embedded with the U.S. Army informed his new book of short stories, *These Heroic, Happy Dead,* from which this month's fiction, *A Beautiful Country,* is drawn.



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OPPOSITE PAGE: PHOTOGRAPH BY KAVA GORNA

ON THE COVER Keilani Asmus, photographed by Henrik Purienne.
Spring has sprung, and so has our Rabbit—right into the petals of Keilani's flower.

MUSK

JŌVAN

It's what attracts

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"In Chile, where I was born, we have a food-centric culture: Everyone comes together on weekends to grill steak and drink wine. It's nothing like an American barbecue. We start at three P.M. and go all night. Nowadays everyone is obsessed with ordering from Seamless and watching cooking shows. We want to make our lives easier instead of actually cooking, just so we have more time to ourselves. But then what do we do with that free time? Life happens around food. It will always bring us together."

Lorenza Izzo stars on AMC's new restaurant drama Feed the Beast with David Schwimmer and Jim Sturgess.

"Food porn will always be more pleasurable than real porn."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS SHONTING

The Asian Cocktail Revolution

Forget sake bombs and soju martinis. The Asian cocktail goes artisanal

Until a few years ago, ordering a cocktail crafted with an Asian-made spirit would almost always get you a god-awful fruit-flavored *soju* martini or a sake bomb devoid of creativity. But with a variety of Asian spirits gaining popularity with American drinkers, creative bartenders are looking to the East for mixological inspiration. Here's a guide to some major categories, plus advice and recipes from the experts who are breaking new ground.—*Jason Horn*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GRANT CORNETT

HOW NOT TO ORDER A SAKETINI

Four Asianesque drinks that will expand your experience of what a cocktail can be

FUJIAN MARTINI

Although Chinese *baijiu* is the most-consumed spirit in the world, bartenders in the U.S. have only just begun to explore its funky, savory, chocolaty, mushroomy (yes, mushroomy) cocktail possibilities. At New York's Lumos, America's first *baijiu* bar, owner Orson Salicetti likes to pair it with date, apricot, pineapple, chili pepper, sesame and other complex flavors. Salicetti's Fujian martini infuses the spirit with lemongrass and mixes it with ginger liqueur, lemon and lychee for a sweet-sour-spicy beverage that's a gentle introduction to the world of *baijiu.* **Ingredients:** 1½ oz. lemongrass-infused *baijiu* (add one bunch lemongrass, peeled and chopped, to 750 ml. *baijiu;* strain and rebottle after six days); 1¾ oz. lychee juice (puree canned lychee fruit; double-strain to obtain juice); ¾ oz. Domaine de Canton ginger liqueur; ¾ oz. fresh lemon juice. **Method:** Add all ingredients to shaker and fill with ice. Shake, strain into coupe glass and garnish with slice of lemongrass.

IMPROVED SHOCHU COCKTAIL

Shochu is a clear Japanese spirit that can be distilled from a wide variety of bases (usually rice, barley or sweet potatoes), and it's typically bottled at the fairly low strength of 25 percent alcohol (even lower for *soju, shochu*'s Korean counterpart). "*Shochu* tastes similar to vodka if it's distilled from barley. If distilled from sweet potatoes, it almost tastes like *rhum agricole,*" says Kenta Goto, whose eponymous Bar Goto in New York embraces Japanese cocktail ingredients from *shochu* to the milk-based soft drink Calpico. Goto likes to add "a small portion of a higher-proof spirit to give a backbone"—as he does in his improved *shochu* cocktail. **Ingredients:** 2 oz. *shochu* such as Mizunomai; 2 tsp. barrel-aged gin such as Berkshire Mountain Distillers Ethereal gin; 1½ tsp. sugarcane syrup; 1 dash Kiuchi No Shizuku (spirit distilled from Japanese white ale). **Method:** Add all ingredients to mixing glass and fill with ice. Stir, then strain into *masu* (wooden sake box) or rocks glass.

LICKING OUR WOUNDS

At Reserve 101 in Houston, co-owner Mike Raymond has assembled Texas's best whiskey selection, including a dozen Japanese whiskeys representing just about every bottling available in the country. When it comes to making a cocktail, Raymond says, "you don't want anything overpowering the whiskey"—which is why a highball is the right way to go. With spiced sherry syrup and tonic that complement the Hibiki Japanese Harmony whiskey, Raymond's licking our wounds is one such drink. **Ingredients:** 1½ oz. Hibiki Japanese Harmony whiskey; ½ oz. oloroso syrup (equal parts simple syrup and oloroso sherry simmered with 1 tsp. cloves and 1 tsp. peppercorns for 10 minutes, then strained); ¼ oz. fresh lime juice; 2 dashes lavender bitters; tonic water; mint sprig. **Method:** Add all ingredients except tonic water and mint to highball glass filled with ice. Top with tonic and stir briefly. Garnish with mint sprig.

THE WESTERN

Sake is, of course, Japanese rice wine, but if you think of it only as a warm shot downed with cheap sushi, you haven't had the good stuff. "I tend to think of sakes as playing the role of a vermouth or a liqueur in a cocktail recipe," says Martha Chong, bartender at Camino in Oakland, California. She has developed cocktails for northern California sake breweries Sequoia Sake Company and Takara Sake USA, as well as Umami Mart, an Oakland sake and bar-tool shop. Two of Chong's favorite types of sake to use in cocktails are *genshu,* which isn't diluted before bottling and has a higher alcohol content, and *nigori,* an unfiltered sake that's cloudy in color, quite sweet and very dense. Her cocktail, the western, uses a *genshu* sake, spicy rye whiskey and a splash of *génépy,* a liqueur flavored with botanicals found in the Alps. **Ingredients:** 2 oz. Sequoia *genshu* sake; ½ oz. rye whiskey; 1 tsp. *génépy.* **Method:** Add all ingredients to rocks glass filled with a single large ice cube. Stir to combine.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ALEX CITRIN

FOOD

Why I Opened a Restaurant

Full-time musician and sometime restaurateur Moby on why he'd do such an insane thing

BY **MOBY**

Two weeks after September 11, 2001 my then girlfriend and I were thinking about what we could do to save our relationship and also make some sense of living in a decimated lower Manhattan. Our first thought was that because we truly loved alcohol we would open a bar. But then we realized we were alcoholics in training and opening a bar probably wasn't the brightest idea. Then we thought we'd have a baby. But we were both doing obscene amounts of drugs and had managed to break up once a week for the previous two years, so having a baby seemed like it might be problematic. Finally we decided we'd open a vegan café, despite the fact that neither of us had ever opened a business or worked in a restaurant.

Generally speaking, the aftermath of September 11 in lower Manhattan was horrifying. The air was full of soot and the National Guard required that you show identification just to cross the street and go to the deli. But there was one small bright spot: Everyone was fleeing our neighborhood, so rents were low. We found an empty storefront, rented it and set about trying to open a little vegan café on a stretch primarily known for crack and heroin dealers.

Our relationship ended as we were renovating the space, but the restaurant opened and somehow succeeded. It was tiny (we named it TeaNY), and people loved it.

After a few years I moved to Los Angeles and ended my involvement in the restaurant. Time passed, and I found myself missing our little café. I didn't miss the dysfunction or the larcenous employees or the junkies OD'ing in the bathroom. But I missed having a space where I could present vegan food in a way that didn't make meat eaters run away in horror.

I've been a vegan since 1987, and one of the biggest challenges I've faced has been getting meat eaters not to preemptively turn up their nose at vegan food. Most omnivores assume vegan food is sad and tasteless, which up until 1990 it largely was. The scene in *Annie Hall* when Woody Allen sits in a vegan restaurant in Los Angeles and miserably orders a plate of mashed yeast is what most nonvegans have thought of when it comes to vegan food.

But over time things changed, and with TeaNY I loved having a space where I could show people that veganism isn't about anemic and angry people scowling at plates of mashed yeast while listening to Morrissey records.

Other restaurants helped move the needle on vegan food away from "sad-tasteless" to "happy-great" too. Friends would go to Blossom or Candle 79 in New York, Millennium in San Francisco or Crossroads in Los Angeles and say, surprised, "I ate at a vegan restaurant, and it was good!" Then, being slightly shallow, they might also add, "And every woman in the restaurant was beautiful!"

A year ago someone told me about a restaurant space for sale in Silver Lake. Despite having sworn off the restaurant business, I thought, I guess I *do* want to open another. I settled on a name, Little Pine (because I'm little and I like pine trees), hired a kitchen staff and opened my new restaurant. I wanted to show people that vegan food has changed and that by being a vegan or even occasionally eating vegan food you can reduce climate change, reduce deforestation, reduce erectile dysfunction, hang out with beautiful vegans, be nice to animals and actually be satisfied with what you eat (and drink—as an alkie I'm now sober, but we have a lot of wine and beer for you people who still know how to have fun).

And let me admit: Owning and running a restaurant is hard and expensive and largely frustrating. But when I walk into Little Pine and see a room full of people eating vegan food and flirting and drinking and talking, it warms my little grinch heart and makes me truly happy. ■

ILLUSTRATION BY GARY BASEMAN

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RETRO STREET BIKES FOR BEGINNERS

Chances are, if you've ever found yourself in a neighborhood like Bushwick in Brooklyn or Echo Park in Los Angeles or cruising the Pacific Coast Highway, you've seen a kind of bike and a kind of guy. The bike is vintage and low-slung. The guy is often dressed to match the bike. And chances are he hasn't been riding for very long. You see, we're smack in the middle of a retro-street-bike revolution. Just a few years ago, if you wanted to ride a motorcycle that had that combination of retro flair, rideability and reliability, you didn't have many choices. But today, beginners have more options than ever before: The bikes are tastefully designed, and they look old but ride like new. Here are five damn handsome bikes for beginners and beyond.—*Wes Siler*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CORY PIEHOWICZ

MOTORCYCLES

TRIUMPH BONNEVILLE STREET TWIN
The new model of the iconic English café racer is the most futuristic retro bike you can ride. Technologies such as ABS and traction control keep you safe in modern traffic, but a torquey 900 cc parallel-twin engine and quality running gear make it a blast to ride, even by 2016 standards. And it's one of the few bikes that will charge your iPhone.
(starting at $8,700)

ROYAL ENFIELD CONTINENTAL GT
This café-racer riff on the Bullet was first produced more than 50 years ago. Just like the scene that emerged in London in the 1960s, the Continental is a stripped-down vehicle ideal for blasting through city streets. As a bonus, owning an Enfield will turn you into a real mechanic: The build quality is straight out of the 1960s too.
(starting at $6,000)

YAMAHA XSR900
Its 847 cc inline-three engine is probably too powerful, and its chassis too sharp, for your first bike, but the XSR900 would be perfect after you've ridden something smaller, lighter and less powerful for a year. Hone your skills, save your cash, and you could be polishing this thing in 2017. Learning to ride a motorcycle for real never looked so good.
(starting at $9,500)

HARLEY STREET 750
This bike wins races on the flat-track circuit for a reason: It's the best Harley-Davidson model since the legendary V-Rod. It has a liquid-cooled engine and produces more power than the Sportster while still being an easy ride for beginners. With low-key paint, a bullet fairing, fork gaiters and long, low looks, the 750 is one bike that's ready right out of the box.
(starting at $7,550)

DUCATI SCRAMBLER
Basically all you need on two wheels. Ducatis are known for their powerful motors and race-winning handling, but with the Scrambler the company has delivered a bike that's fun to ride, day in and day out, for anyone from experienced racers to white-knuckled newbies. Full of character, capable and easy to ride, the Scrambler is a simple pleasure for all.
(starting at $8,000)

Proper Motorcycle Attire Explained

Our seasoned motorcycle writer tells you how to strike a balance between safety and style

RULE 1: LOWER THE RISK

Motorcycles are dangerous. That's a big part of the reason you want one, and a big part of why I ride and write about them. Offsetting that danger with quality motorcycle gear can be not only a smart choice but a stylish one too. My Vanson leather jacket bears the scars of half a dozen crashes—crashes in which it saved me from injury. When I wear it, I don't just look like I bought a nice leather jacket; I'm wearing the danger. If you want to look like a biker, be a biker. Real safety gear will allow you to ride more, ride better and walk away with stories, not broken bones.

RULE 2: WEAR A MODERN HELMET

Retro helmets, bubble visors and bandannas look really cool on Instagram. But these getups are uncomfortable, unsafe and noisy and offer poor ventilation. A modern helmet will be stable at high speeds, quiet on long trips, cool when it's hot, warm when it's cold and safe in a crash. If you get it right, it will look menacing too. New, smaller sport helmets, such as the Icon Airframe Pro and the Shoei RF-1200, offer improved aerodynamics and lighter weights—and less of that dreaded Q-tip look when you're wearing one.

RULE 3: BOOT UP

Test any item of footwear you're considering wearing on a motorcycle by grabbing the heel in one hand and the toe box in the other and then twisting as hard as you can. That's what will happen to the boot in a crash. Does it look like something you want your foot in? Your feet and ankles have to support hundreds of pounds of bike and rider on uneven, often slippery surfaces. Get an over-the-ankle boot with good support, good traction and strong, thick soles. My World War II–style paratrooper boots wrap my ankles, have a steel shank and look better than any of the bullshit thin-soled stuff out there.

RULE 4: PROTECT YOUR LOWER HALF

I recently visited a friend in the hospital who has a fractured pelvis. He's not going to walk for a few months, because he crashed his bike at 30 mph while wearing skinny jeans. It's easy to throw on a leather jacket; protecting your lower half takes more effort. There's a raft of so-called motorcycle jeans out there that include some Kevlar for abrasion protection, but only armor that covers the knees and hips can help prevent serious injury (it would have saved my buddy's bones). In town I wear a pair of armored uglyBROS jeans, but I zip on an Aerostich Roadcrafter suit for anything fast or dangerous.

RULE 5: RIDE YOUR OWN RIDE

Figure out what works for you and own it. Don't simply buy into a look you see on someone else, on social media or in a glossy magazine. Prioritize function first. Utility will always be cooler than faking it. I used to be self-conscious about being the guy at a party with helmet hair and padded shoulders, until I realized I was the only guy in a leather jacket who actually belonged in one—and looked like it. And you can too.—*Wes Siler*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JONATHAN LEDER

FOLLOW THE BUNNY
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+playboy

TAG HEUER CONNECTED
TAG HEUER
CARRERA
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From top: Tag Heuer Connected, LG Watch Urbane, Samsung Gear S2 Classic.

Smart Watches That Actually Look Smart

If you like the idea of wearing an overly branded minicomputer on your wrist, the Apple Watch is pretty cool. The second-gen iOS has even added native apps, changeable faces and at-a-glance schedules. But for guys who like watches, it still doesn't really look like a watch. Fortunately, the three featured here blend technology and horology (translation: timekeeping) in a way that's both smart and smart-looking.—Vincent Boucher

TAG HEUER CONNECTED

Starting with the black coated-titanium case and scratch-resistant sapphire crystal, the Tag Heuer Connected looks like the high-end sports watch it is. Android users have access to everything in Google Play, and it's also iOS compatible. Features include the standard stopwatch, timer and alarm, as well as wind and weather monitoring and a chronograph dial option. ($1,500, shop-us.tagheuer.com)

LG WATCH URBANE

The sleek stainless steel Watch Urbane reads as a classic timepiece, but its tech rundown includes Android Wear, which allows you to send texts, check scores or get turn-by-turn directions with a simple "Okay, Google." Fitness buffs will love its ability to track and record heart rate and steps, plus it syncs up favorite tracks and makes a workout phone-free with Bluetooth-ready headphones. ($349, amazon.com)

SAMSUNG GEAR S2 CLASSIC

Just introduced with a platinum-finish dial this spring, the Gear S2 Classic from Samsung has a circular display for a bright, crisp picture and a unique rotating bezel for easier navigation. Choose between a Bluetooth model or 3G/4G connectivity that lets you make calls directly from your wrist with the built-in speaker and microphone when your Android phone isn't nearby. ($449, samsung.com)

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GRANT CORNETT

CASEY NEISTAT

For the YouTube genius who snowboarded through Times Square, life in New York hasn't always been a viral joyride

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **JEREMY LIEBMAN**

MY WAY

I grew up in southeastern Connecticut, two and a half hours from New York City. I always romanticized New York and obsessed about it in a way I now reserve for the look on my baby daughter's face. My parents would take my siblings and me into the city maybe once or twice a year, but if I had to trace my fascination with New York to one thing it was the Tom Hanks movie *Big*. I had it on VHS and would play it on repeat. Here was this kid who miraculously turned into an adult but had the brain of a child, and by maintaining his youthful spirit he was able to succeed in this gigantic playground that was New York City. Playing piano with his feet got him a promotion. To me, that movie was fucking gospel.

I moved to New York when I was 20. I was a bike messenger that first summer, which was horrible. This was 2001, so you had to pay for your cell phone minutes. I lived in a 12-by-12-foot room on the Upper West Side for $370 a month. The building was partly filled with people who'd recently been let out of jail. I shared a wall with a family who had a hot plate, and I could smell whatever it was they were cooking, through the wall, all day, every day.

I was always making videos. Always. I had a little table with my pink, bulbous iMac that I edited on. The way I distributed videos was through something called iDisk, which was essentially an early Dropbox. I would give people my user name and password so they could log in to my account and download my QuickTime videos.

No matter how poor I was, nothing could upset me. No matter how rough my living situation was, I wasn't a victim. I put myself in that situation. If I couldn't find success with my videos, it was no one's fault but my own. And even when I was struggling under the harshest of conditions, all I had to do was step outside and look up and see these big magnificent buildings.

Most places in this country, you're taught that if you follow the rules, listen to your superiors and do as you're told, everything will be all right. I'm of the conviction that it won't be. I believe in defining my own rules. If there's 27 inches of snow on the ground and I know I can safely snowboard behind a truck, good fucking luck convincing me I shouldn't. New York City encourages and embraces that kind of thinking. In fact, if you come here and think you *can't* think like that, you'll most likely fail.

Forty-four million people watched that snowboarding video. The next night, they played it in Madison Square Garden at a Rangers game, and the crowd burst into applause. The fact that I make a living at this...man, it's fucking Tom Hanks in *Big!*

AS TOLD TO SEAN MANNING

Give Me the Lowdown on Going Down

Q: *Last night at a party I found myself arguing with two of my women friends about cunnilingus. After I modestly talked up my skills, one of them said, "I can take or leave oral sex. I bet your girlfriend fakes it." The other laughed and said she'd had an orgasm that way only once—and mostly because of the MDMA she was on, not her partner's performance. As if this weren't emasculating enough, a third girl cut in with, "I've never had an orgasm from oral, and God knows it's not from lack of trying—all those poor men trapped under the duvet, licking for 40 minutes. You almost have to fake it to give them a break." I really want to please women, but I feel less sure than ever about how to go about this.*

BY **RACHEL RABBIT WHITE**

A: Like fingerprints, like snowflakes, like women themselves, every orgasm is different. If your question is whether there are women who enjoy cunnilingus, allow me to answer with a resounding yes—yes, *ooh* fuck, yes.

Being able to give good head is a worthwhile life skill. And while good oral sex doesn't always end in orgasm, every man should make it a goal—an item on his sexual bucket list—to plant his face between a woman's legs and not stop working until she's convulsing in pleasure. It's not an easy place to get to, but anything of value comes at a price—and in this case you have to pay with your precious time. And since you surveyed your female friends on the topic, I decided to poll mine. "It's not that I could take or leave oral sex during a routine hookup. Not at all," said Erica. "It's just that token dives are dumb. That thing where they sort of skim the pussy as if sipping the foam from a cappuccino—I mean, how would you feel if my mouth did a drive-by on your dick?" Sex researchers found that the popularity of blow jobs peaked and then leveled in the 1960s and 1970s, but the act of giving a woman head has taken decades to rise. "Rappers make mixtapes about it; bros brag about it," said another friend. "But somehow, going down on a woman isn't entirely about female desire—it's more about male bravado."

Mutual enjoyment is half of good sex. The other half is skill. There's plenty of e-literature to guide you toward creating deep vulvar attunement; treat it like homework. Memorize the steps about easing the tongue onto her clit. Learn how to tease with vertical and horizontal strokes. Try making those silly alphabet shapes with your tongue. Do that intense sucking motion. Trail a finger behind the tongue as you work into a reliable rhythm, adding pressure, pressing two fingers inside with a curling motion as you make butterfly tongue strokes, remembering to keep her legs slightly together so her pelvic muscles can spasm as you maintain the position.

And lest you forget these nuances and panic, lost in a wilderness of minora and majora, relax. The whole experience is supposed to feel languorous, vacationlike: Rise late, proceed at a slow pace. Read the signs, ask for directions.

And maybe the next time you hear women at a party talking about oral sex, they'll be declaring how they used to be able to take it or leave it—until this guy last night.

Questions? E-mail advisor@playboy.com.

ILLUSTRATION BY MIKE PERRY

Photo by Moses Moreno

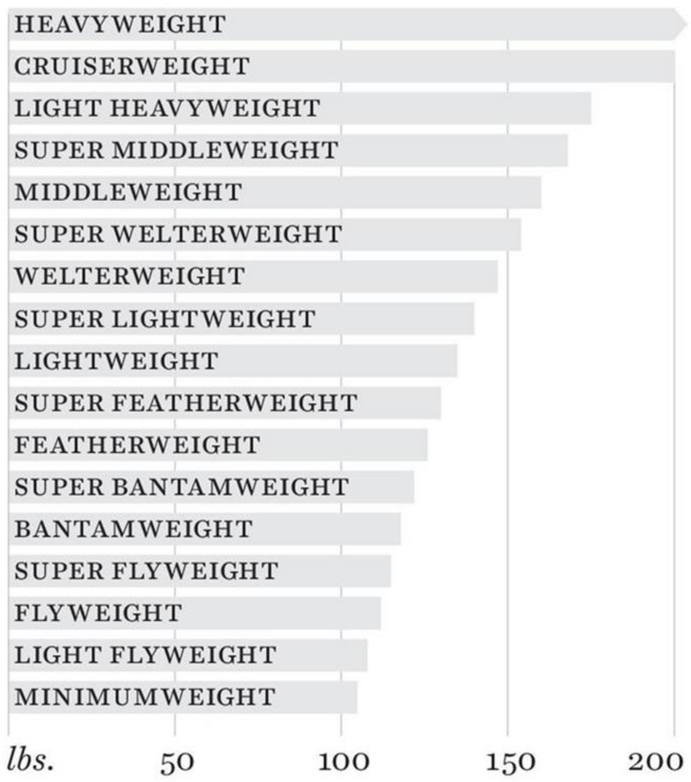
Photographed in the Upper East Side
of New York

www.moodsofnorway.com
7964 Melrose Ave. Los Angeles
moods of norway

ON BOXING

BY **BEN SCHOTT**

WEIGHTS & MEASURES



BY THE NUMBERS

Boxing's **LONGEST MATCH** was between Jack Burke (left) and Andy Bowen in 1893; the two boxed for seven hours and 19 minutes before the umpire declared a draw. ¥ The **SHORTEST MATCH** for a world title lasted 17 seconds—the time it took Daniel Jiménez to knock out Harald Geier in 1994. ¥ The **RICHEST MATCH** was likely Floyd Mayweather Jr. vs. Manny Pacquiao in 2015; it grossed more than $600 million, including pay-per-view TV revenue of more than $400 million. Mayweather won.

NICKNAMED FIGHTS

Belts are one thing, cash another. But to box in a match given a lasting nickname—that's class.

The Long Count	9/22/1927	**GENE TUNNEY**	UD~10	JACK DEMPSEY
The Fight of the Century	3/8/1971	**JOE FRAZIER**	UD~15	MUHAMMAD ALI
The Sunshine Showdown	1/22/1973	JOE FRAZIER	TKO~2	**GEORGE FOREMAN**
Rumble in the Jungle	10/30/1974	GEORGE FOREMAN	KO~8	**MUHAMMAD ALI**
Thrilla in Manila	10/1/1975	**MUHAMMAD ALI**	RTD~14	JOE FRAZIER
The Brawl in Montreal	6/20/1980	SUGAR RAY LEONARD	UD~15	**ROBERTO DURÁN**
The Showdown	9/16/1981	**SUGAR RAY LEONARD**	TKO~14	THOMAS HEARNS
The War	4/15/1985	**MARVIN HAGLER**	TKO~3	THOMAS HEARNS
Finally	11/9/1996	MIKE TYSON	TKO~11	**EVANDER HOLYFIELD**
The Bite Fight	6/28/1997	**EVANDER HOLYFIELD**	DQ~3	MIKE TYSON

KEY · UNANIMOUS DECISION · TECHNICAL KNOCKOUT · KNOCKOUT · RETIRED · DISQUALIFIED · ~ ROUND · **WINNER**

LET'S GET READY

The catchphrase "Let's get ready to *rrrumble*" has been synonymous with fight night since announcer Michael Buffer (left) first deployed it in 1984; he has since trademarked it.

UP TO SCRATCH

Traditionally, the center of a boxing ring was marked with a line called the **SCRATCH**—any fighter unable to meet his opponent at this point was literally not "up to scratch."

BOXING INJURIES

In addition to suffering cuts and contusions, breaks and sprains, concussions, comas and death, boxers are prone to a range of other injuries, including: **CAULIFLOWER EAR** (*auricular hematoma*) · a thickening of the cartilage of the outer ear caused by repeated blows to the side of the head. ¥ **CHRONIC TRAUMATIC ENCEPHALOPATHY** · a degenerative brain disease caused by repeated blows to the head; includes conditions previously known as *dementia pugilistica*, *punch-drunk syndrome* and *pugilistic parkinsonism*. ¥ **ANOSMIA** · the loss of the sense of smell, often caused by damage to the olfactory nerve as a result of head trauma.

LEXICON FISTIANA · A GLOSSARY OF UNUSUAL & ARCHAIC BOXING SLANG

CLARET/DUTCH PINK/GRAVY/RUBY . . . . . blood
CLARET CHRISTENING . . . . . drawing first blood
CLARET JUG/CONK/SCENT BOX/SMELLER . . . . . the nose
DUTCH OVEN/KISSER/MUZZLER/POTATO TRAP . . . . . the mouth
MITT/MUFFLER/PILLOW . . . . . boxing glove
NOB/NOBBLER/NOGGIN/PIMPLE . . . . . the head
OGLES/PEEPERS . . . . . the eyes
PAINTED . . . . . to be covered in blood
PALOOKA . . . . . an inferior or incompetent fighter
PINKED . . . . . when the face or body is marked by fighting
RING-WORM. . . . . a habitual attendee of boxing matches
SKIAMACHY . . . . . shadowboxing or a faked fight
SKY THE WIPE . . . . . to throw in the sponge (or towel)
STARCHING . . . . . knocking an opponent to the canvas
VICTUALING OFFICE/MIDDLE PIECE. . . . . the stomach
VISIT PEPPER ALLEY. . . . . to receive a severe beating

NOTABLE NICKNAMES: *Vinny "the Pazmanian Devil" Pazienza · Lew "the Sweet Swatter From Sweetwater" Jenkins · DaVarryl "Touch of Sleep" Williamson · Apollo "the Count of Monte Fisto" Creed · Henry "the Coal Heaver" Bricker · Elizabeth "the Cockney Championess" Wilkinson · Peter "Young Rump Steak" Crawley · James "Bonecrusher" Smith · Juan "the Hispanic Causing Panic" Lazcano*

KEEGAN-MICHAEL KEY

With Key & Peele behind him and his first marquee movie role (alongside a do-rag-sporting kitten) out this month, the comedian pauses to talk race, religion and Hamlet's anger translator

BY **ERIC SPITZNAGEL** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **DAVE MA**

Q1: *The plot of your new movie, Keanu, involves two guys trying to find a stolen cat. Forgive us for saying so, but that doesn't exactly sound like the smart social satire you and Jordan Peele are known for. Are you slumming it?*

KEEGAN-MICHAEL KEY: It started out as a sort of exercise. Our platform has mostly been exploring African American masculinity and what it means to be a person of color in America. That's a recurring theme in *Key & Peele*. So how do you do that as a movie? Jordan tried putting it into a feature-length script, and we realized there was something missing. These guys, the two main characters, weren't pursuing anything. I thought the cat was Jordan's way of being sly. I thought it was a reference to Blake Snyder's *Save the Cat!,* which is a screenwriting book. But he told me, "No, I just think cats are cute. Everybody likes cats, right? Especially women." That was seriously his justification for the cat. It's really quite brilliant.

Q2: *Do you have any misgivings about ending Key & Peele?*

KEY: Not in the least. The show was a chapter, and the chapter's over, and it was a really rip-roaring chapter of this book. Honestly, doing *Key & Peele* was just so exhausting. From the first day of writing to the last day of shooting, one season usually took about 10 and a half months. It's a very long haul. One day Jordan and I just looked at each other, and it wasn't like a big declaration. We were kind of sheepish about it. "Should we just be done? Yeah, let's be done." So that's what we did. Let's get out before we start repeating ourselves.

Q3: *It's hard to imagine you guys running out of ideas. Couldn't Key & Peele run for another 20 years and still be the most original show on TV?*

KEY: I don't think so. I'm a structure nerd. I like Aristotle and Empedocles and Sophocles and Euripides and all that stuff. Since the beginning of theater, there's pretty much been seven plots. So when people ask, "Why's your show done?" I tell them it's because I don't want anybody to watch season seven and go, "I feel like they did this sketch already." Oh, we totally did, but this time the characters are in space suits. You know what I mean? Same sketch, but now they're old-timey prospectors.

Q4: *You've said that you and Peele "fell in comedy love." How is that different from actual love?*

KEY: It's not different at all. I get the same butterflies in my stomach. I saw him the other day when we were doing voice-overs for a movie. We haven't seen each other a lot recently, and I was like, Wow, he's amazing. We both have our own intrinsic goofiness. I'm going to use some fancy words so I sound supersmart: Jordan has a very phlegmatic demeanor, and I have a very sanguine demeanor. [*laughs*] So we fit together kind of perfectly.

Q5 : *Comedy Central promoted the first season of Key & Peele with the tagline "If you don't watch,*

you're racist." Do you think the show changed any minds about race in America?

KEY: The unsatisfying answer is that I have no idea if we've changed or modulated anybody's thinking at all. Sometimes I'll be approached by somebody—and let me say, I'm well aware that what I'm about to say is racist. I'll be approached by a 62-year-old white man from Wichita who goes, "Are you that substitute teacher guy from TV?" When someone of that demographic says that to me, first of all, I can pretty much guarantee they haven't seen the show. Their nephew showed them a YouTube video over Thanksgiving. And then my fear is, what if this man is thinking [*in a redneck drawl*], Niggers, that's what they do: They give each other fucking stupid names. I would love to think that's not what's going on, but that's what my suspicions are.

Q6: *Maybe something good comes from it. What if the racist 62-year-old white guy goes looking for more Key & Peele videos and a more positive message starts to sink in?*

KEY: That's the warm, unicorn, rainbow side of that coin. Maybe that racist guy goes, "Those two black guys are clever. I didn't know niggers could be that clever." Now, that's still racist, but it's at least cracking the nut open a little bit.

Q7: *When you and Peele accepted your Peabody Award in 2013, you thanked Comedy Central for letting you "show the African American experience as not a monolith, because it's not." Isn't that an awful lot of responsibility for a comedy show—fairly representing an entire race of people?*

KEY: It's pretty easy, actually. You just remember that black people are human beings who happen to have melanin in our skin, and then you write about the human experience. The racial point of view comes second. If you write comedy with huge human themes, then you appeal to everybody. You'll hit on something that even a Taliban member has felt. That's the ultimate goal for me: not to make African Americans feel understood, but to make *everyone* feel understood. Then you slap some cultural stuff on the back end, and they give you a bunch of awards for being black. That's our formula.

Q8: *What are the ground rules for racial humor in 2016? What's acceptable? Is it about the skin color of the performer or the content of the joke?*

KEY: The thing is, we're not dealing with the real problem. Race is the symptom. We'll eventually get to a point where race becomes secondary, or not even an issue. It'll become a strange phenomenon that everybody barely remembers. Like, "Remember when everybody got all worked up about skin color?" It'll be like when we talk about the world before penicillin. "Seriously, people died from a *staph infection*?" In another 75 years, everyone will look like me. And then it will only be about class. But until we get to that point, you can't make jokes about a race that isn't your own. You can make jokes about people with a certain amount of melanin in their skin only if you have the same amount in your skin. And yes, I'm aware that this is the second time I've used the word *melanin* in this interview.

Q9: *You originally wanted to be a dramatic actor. Your dream was to do Shakespeare, but you ended up in comedy. What happened?*

KEY: I fell in with a bunch of guys at the Second City theater in Detroit. It was 1997, I think, and it was just something to do while I waited for other opportunities. I think I was secretly harboring desires to do comedy. I was getting a paycheck, which is a very rare thing if you're doing theater, especially Shakespeare. I joined Second City in Chicago three or four years after that. And then in 2004 *MADtv* came calling, and I did that for a while, and that led to *Key & Peele,* and... let's just say I've been on a 19-year detour.

Q10: *If you went back to theater, what's the big Shakespeare role you've always wanted to play?*

KEY: I have a standing invitation to play Hamlet at the Chicago Shakespeare Theater. That's something that scares the bejesus out of me. Because, you know, when I'm ready, I can do it. But then, well, then I have to do it. [*laughs*]

Q11: *Especially when there will be people in the audience who think, Is Hamlet going to have an anger translator?*

KEY: Now there's an idea! Can you imagine? Hamlet's anger translator would be like, "Why don't you just kill this motherfucker!" I might just find a way to make that happen.

Q12: *Luther, the anger translator for President Obama, was one of the most popular characters on Key & Peele. When you played him with the actual President Obama at last year's White House Correspondents' Dinner, did you feel he enjoyed the character because you nailed exactly what he was feeling?*

KEY: Without a doubt. He said as much to us. The very first time Jordan and I met him, that was one of the first things out of his mouth. [*does perfect Obama impression*] "I need Luther; I definitely need him." Before the Correspondents' Dinner, he was reading some of the jokes, and one of them—I think it was about how everything he does is blocked

OBAMA GETS A 10 AS A STRAIGHT MAN. HIS TIMING... YOU CAN'T TEACH THAT.

on the Hill—he just stopped and went, "Well, this isn't even a joke. This is real." And then he said, "This shit is ridiculous." I can't tell you how awesome it was to hear him swear.

Q13: *How funny is Obama?*

KEY: He gets a 10 as a straight man. His timing is just...you can't teach that. It's scary how good his timing is.

Q14: *Can you really not teach a sense of humor? Did your parents play a role in cultivating yours?*

KEY: If your parents teach you "Don't you fucking act a fool in front of these white people," it's very hard for that person to become a comedian. You need to feel you have a certain amount of freedom to even think you could be funny. Growing up, I never felt being funny was wrong. I loved watching my father laugh at the television. He was kind of a somber guy, but he had the loudest, shriekiest laugh in a movie theater. And that didn't just give me permission to be funny; it was like a challenge. I wanted to hear that sound coming from my dad, and I wanted to be the one who caused it.

Q15: *Was comedy your defense mechanism? Were you ever funny because "It's getting uncomfortable in here and I don't like that"?*

KEY: It was always a defense mechanism. If you're raised by a sweet little farm girl from northern Illinois and a black guy from Salt Lake City, and you grow up in Detroit, you better figure something out.

Q16: *In a Second City show that opened in November 2001, you played an Afghan cabdriver desperately trying to prove his patriotism. Did you ever think, Too soon?*

KEY: Every. Single. Night. I remember thinking, There's a very good chance a chair or beer bottle is going to come flying at us. But the first time we did it in front of an audience, I have never—and this is not hyperbole—I've never heard laughter like that in my life. I've never heard laughter that cathartic in my entire life. The place went bananas. It's probably the character I'm most proud of. I mean from anything.

Q17: *Can you believe how much has changed since then? Thank goodness we live in a time when Muslims aren't all assumed to be terrorists anymore.*

KEY: Finally! All we needed to do was bring democracy to the Fertile Crescent, and now everything's perfect.

Q18: *You're a Christian, but your comedy isn't always friendly to religion. There's a scene in the second season of Key & Peele where you play Mary Magdalene's pimp. How do you balance satire with your personal spiritual beliefs?*

KEY: I think they complement each other. To truly satirize something, you have to understand it inside and out. You can't be coming from a place of fear. Look at somebody like Bill Maher. If Maher set foot in a church once in a while, I think he'd have a little more basis to understand what he's making jokes about. I'm *more* qualified to make fun and test the veracity of spiritual stuff because I have been a Catholic, I have been a Buddhist, I have been an evangelical Christian. I realize I'm being incendiary here, but Maher is just.... I don't know what priest molested him or what spiritual figure hurt him, but you don't have that much anger toward religion because you disagree with it intellectually, you know what I mean?

Q19: *Do you think he has a personal ax to grind?*

KEY: I don't know. I like Bill a lot, but it does feel like his entire comedic point of view about religion is coming from a place of fear. It's always a polemic, and it's always invective. That's why I don't feel conflicted when I do comedy about religion. It never comes from fear. And it's not coming from blind reverence either. You need to be constantly questioning your faith.

Q20: *You've questioned your belief in God?*

KEY: All the time! Every damn day. And it's not easy. I know what it's like to have firmly held beliefs. You cling to them. You fight for them. They're sacred and precious to you. You don't want to hear that something you've put a good deal of your life into believing and holding dear might be false. But you need to constantly ask yourself, Is this working for me, or am I doing it because my parents did it, and they did it because their parents did it? Those are terrifying questions, but true faith needs to be challenged. Otherwise, what is it worth? ■

ALL OUR HEROES HAVE ISSUES

Meet the new generation of caped crusaders—and don't be surprised if they balance superhuman strength with very human mental illness

BY **SEAN EDGAR**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY TREY WRIGHT

Comic book writers used to issue every villain a corrosive mental malady along with a kick-ass costume. But a handful of pioneering comics creators have gradually introduced a new breed of heroes who clash with mental illness and humanoid foes in equal measure.

Take comics veteran Jeff Lemire, who has used drawing and writing as a way to grapple with his own depression. The Canadian artist helms *Bloodshot* for Valiant and *Moon Knight* for Marvel—both of which feature protagonists who suffer from mental disorders. "Batman is certainly as crazy as the Joker, but he's considered heroic and the Joker is considered a maniac," says Lemire, looking back on the DC juggernaut's 77-year legacy. "People weren't as open to talking about this kind of thing."

The golden age of comic books, inaugurated around the first appearance of Superman in 1938, relied on brittle good-versus-evil dichotomies. A villain's motivations were explained, more often than not, by a sinister psychosis evoked through snarling bravado and lots of exclamation points. Batman has cyclically returned "freaks" to Arkham Asylum since the psychiatric hospital was added to the comic in 1974. Even the 2012 debut of *Avengers Assemble,* a teen-friendly book designed to complement Joss Whedon's debut Marvel film, opens with a villain boasting of a bizarre pact "so strong that no matter how psychotic, schizophrenic, bipolar or murderous the people living under it were... they were beholden to the code."

"We, as consumers of fiction, are never more comfortable than when the villain is a cackling evil maniac," explains *X-Men Legacy* writer Simon Spurrier. (Legion, the star of the series, is a former bad guy who battles internal demons.) "But if you look at those characters with anything more than a glance, you realize there's a question of agency. Where does evil start and mental health stop? Villains are very sane people operating on a slightly different moral code."

Even if comics serve as amplified metaphors for real-world issues, the link between mental illness and violence is flimsy at best. A 2014 study by the American Psychological Association found that fewer than eight percent of all crimes committed by those afflicted with serious mental problems were related to symptoms. And researchers at North Carolina State University and Duke University determined that "people with severe mental illnesses, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder or psychosis are two and a half times more likely to be attacked, raped or mugged than the general population."

Far from becoming a breeding ground for nefarious loonies, as old-school comics (to say nothing of Republican debates) might have you believe, the United States appears to be a place where people are becoming more open to candid discussions of mental health. The National Alliance on Mental Illness claims that one in five adults in the country experiences mental illness in a given year, whereas 10 million Americans experience a serious mental illness that interferes with at least one major life activity. That reality is gradually turning up in the world of comics.

The roots of this movement reach to the medium's underground. Robert Crumb, whose brother Charles suffered from schizophrenia, portrays himself in his comics as a tormented and sex-obsessed drug fiend. The 1980s offered up introspective comics aimed at a mature readership: Neil Gaiman and Alan Moore, among others, spent the decade crafting complex, sympathetic characters who wrestle with existential problems.

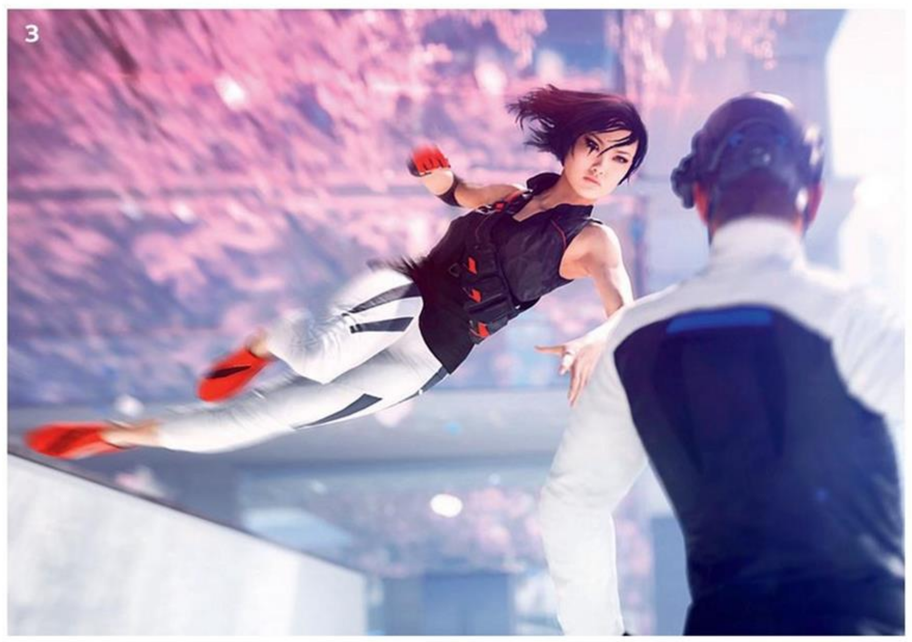
"There was this *Swamp Thing* issue," Gaiman recalls. "On the surface, there was a serial killer; there was a giant muck monster, but you also watched one human systematically destroy another person's integrity, leaving you with someone broken. I remember reading that and going, 'Oh my gosh, this is real people.' It always seemed to me you could tell real stories about real people with very, very unreal things."

The Dark Horse title *Colder,* which offsets Cronenberg-style horror with a protagonist who can "dissolve" madness in those afflicted, debuted in 2012. And in April, Lemire unleashed the most direct specimen of a mentally ill superhero with *Moon Knight*. Created in 1975 by Doug Moench and Don Perlin, the comic revolves around a mercenary who bonds with an ancient Egyptian god. While previous authors hinted that this deity may be a symptom of mental instability, Lemire embraces that aspect of the character—complete with a story arc that begins in an asylum.

"He's the only superhero who overtly addresses schizophrenia and multiple personalities," says Lemire, who also takes on PTSD in his series *Bloodshot Reborn*. "When most superheroes were created, mental illness was seen as a weakness, a flaw, whereas now, people are much more aware that the brain, just like any part of your body, is something that can be sick and treated."

Seen that way, the courage our heroes represent could, just maybe, empower readers to confront demons of their own. "It's all very well flying around and punching aliens, but the simple act of heroism I think most of us are most familiar with is dealing with our own inadequacies and flaws," says Spurrier. "Not necessarily defeating them, but managing them. That's an everyday sort of heroism." ■

Colder (Dark Horse), *Moon Knight* (Marvel) and *Bloodshot Reborn* (Valiant).



PREPARE TO SPEND SUMMER IN SPACE

The days of sun and sangria are almost here—the perfect time to draw those blinds, boot up these games and escape into fantastic (if dystopian) realms far, far away

***1. No Man's Sky* (PC, PS4)**
With 18 quintillion planets to visit in this expansive adventure survival game, the lurid galaxy of *No Man's Sky* seems infinite. But it's about more than discovery: If you consume too much of any planet's resources, robotic Sentinels will hunt you down. Escape those mad bastards and a space battle might blast you to oblivion. No wonder it's one of the most hotly anticipated games of the past five years.

***2. Deus Ex: Mankind Divided* (PC, PS4, Xbox One)**
A riff on the legacies of William Gibson and other sci-fi giants, this cyberpunk open-world shooter features stealth and RPG elements. *Mankind Divided* is part of the recent barrage of postapocalyptic games, and these drone-infested alleys burn with a depressing realism. As covert agent and smooth-haired cyborg Adam Jensen, you'll deploy bombs, lasers and hacking skills to rage against the machines.

***3. Mirror's Edge Catalyst* (PC, PS4, Xbox One)**
Catalyst mixes the freedom of an open world with kick-and-punch goodness. The setting: the city of Glass, a glittering, corrupt pseudo-utopia where the most minor expression of personal freedom gets you locked up. You play as Faith, a sharp-tongued antihero who's like an extra-nihilistic incarnation of Hit Girl from *Kick-Ass.* With superheroic rooftop parkour and zip lines leading to crack-jaw battles, you'll kick the teeth out of your corporate oppressors and toss them from skyscraper windows to the depths below.

***4. Master of Orion* (PC)**
When this space-cowboy strategy game debuted in 1993, it was a creditable riff on the warfare and politics of Sid Meier's *Civilization,* and it went on to inspire Wargaming's Victor Kislyi to create his blockbuster *World of Tanks.* Now Wargaming and the Argentina-based developer NGD have poured millions into reinvigorating *Master of Orion,* in which savvy aliens, city-size spaceships and intimidating weaponry transform you into the Hillary or Donald of the universe. Bonus: voice acting by Michael Dorn and Mark Hamill.—*Harold Goldberg*

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HOW JAZZ SAVED HIP-HOP AGAIN

The story of two South Los Angeles music scenes and Kendrick Lamar's genre-bending album To Pimp a Butterfly

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **OLIVIA JAFFE**

Terrace Martin, Kamasi Washington and Stephen "Thundercat" Bruner.

Nothing more influential than rap music
I merge jazz fusion with the trap music
I mix black soul with some rock and roll
They never box me in.

—KENDRICK LAMAR, "BLACK FRIDAY"

These lines, taken from a freestyle that Compton artist Kendrick Lamar released in late November 2015, land between a riff about what the White House would be like if Kanye West took over and a slick comparison of Lamar's DNA to the psychedelic drug DMT. As usual, the rapper delivers a blast of quotable lyrics across the track, but it's the above salvo that sharply sums up Lamar's *To Pimp a Butterfly*—the 2015 album that garnered him a historic 11 Grammy nominations—and the small, tight-knit cast of L.A. jazz musicians who helped create it.

Saxophonist Kamasi Washington, producer and saxophonist Terrace Martin and bassist Stephen "Thundercat" Bruner are all second-generation musicians, now in their early to mid-30s, who grew up together in South Los Angeles. (The L.A. City Council formally changed the name from "South-Central" in 2003 in an effort to downplay the area's longtime association with gang violence, riots and poverty.) Their group dynamic is immediately apparent: Washington exudes a quiet yet larger-than-life gravity; Thundercat oozes otherworldly cool, offset by a sartorial style that includes pelts, traditional Native American headdresses and outer-space-inspired garb; and Martin, slightly older than the other two and often wearing an L.A. Dodgers cap, plays the role of seasoned streetwise leader.

BY **BRANDEN PETERS**

Double-digit murder rates and gangsta-rap videos don't tell the full story of the L.A. these artists were born into. Theirs was also a world of multi-school jazz bands and such venues as the World Stage Performance Gallery, a pocket-size arts space in the Leimert Park neighborhood that has hosted Herbie Hancock, Elvin Jones, Jackie McLean and Art Blakey. Founded in 1989 by drummer Billy Higgins and poet and community activist Kamau Daáood, the Stage provided a place for jazz musicians to learn from—and spar with—the greats.

The venue sits three doors down from the current home of the famed hip-hop open-mike event Project Blowed—a haven for groundbreaking MCs and the spot where Martin first fused his loves of hip-hop and jazz. Martin credits its drummer Kahron Harrison with breaking down the barriers between jazz and rap artists

in Leimert. "I was doing beats for the hip-hop cats, putting my horn up and pulling it back out when I got to the jazz club," Martin says. "Harrison was going back and forth between the jazz and hip-hop clubs, playing drums for Aceyalone and Myka 9 from Freestyle Fellowship, Medusa and all them cats. I'd take my horn over there and play with them, and that was actually where this West Coast jazz and hip-hop shit started."

Martin met Lamar when the rapper was still in high school. Anthony "Top Dawg" Tiffith, CEO of Top Dawg Entertainment, which would become Lamar's label, had a small home studio in Carson, where he let Martin make beats. Lamar, Top Dawg producer Sounwave and rapper Jay Rock were also around, tending to their nascent careers. "We did a song together to get a deal at Warner Bros.," Martin recalls. The title? " 'I'ma Tell My Mama on You,' with Kendrick on the hook," he says, laughing. "They're gonna hate me if anyone ever hears that song." Martin and Lamar have been tight ever since.

The scenes represented by the two men mingled in the crucible of a Los Angeles populated by working-class people, gang members and corrupt police. It proved to be a setting where players could compose and perform outstanding jazz music—and help create one of the most important albums in hip-hop history.

• • •

But before we get into that album, let's review how jazz and rap came together in the first place.

The two genres, arguably America's first and last true art forms, have enjoyed a rich if complicated relationship since the early 1970s, when DJs would cut the breaks from songs such as Bob James's "Take Me to the Mardi Gras" and "Nautilus" at New York City park jams.

Before old jazz records became a go-to resource for hip-hop producers, the biggest rap records of the 1980s were largely derived from contemporary pop. But with Run-DMC's early use of James's songs and Eric B. & Rakim reintroducing James Brown's funk on their debut album, hip-hop opened up a new lane for recordings that had mostly gone unnoticed by young people in the 1980s. Some established artists balked at the sample use, and rappers retorted—most notably the first hip-hop band, Stetsasonic, with its 1988 single "Talkin All That Jazz."

Even legal cases against De La Soul and Biz Markie in the early 1990s couldn't stem the tide. Producers including Large Professor, Pete Rock, Prince Paul, DJ Premier of Gang Starr, and Ali Shaheed Muhammad and Q-Tip of A Tribe Called Quest made an art form of mining snippets of popular as well as obscure jazz records. The sonic references were not lost on astute listeners like Martin. "I remember listening to A Tribe Called Quest's 'Sucka Nigga' and being like, Oh, that's [Freddie Hubbard's] 'Red Clay'!" he says. "I continued to listen, and it really opened me up to liking jazz in a different way." (In fact, Martin's latest album, *Velvet Portraits,* includes the track "Tribe Called West.")

Eventually rappers and producers worked directly with traditional jazz musicians. Legendary saxophonist (and notorious rap critic) Branford Marsalis tapped DJ Premier to co-produce his crossover album *Buckshot LeFonque.* Premier also contributed heavily to his late partner Guru's *Jazzmatazz* series. Miles Davis's posthumous album *Doo-Bop,* a collaboration with Easy Mo Bee, was the visionary trumpeter's own version of hip-hop.

Since its inception, rap has gone from subculture to corporate juggernaut to some odd hybrid of the two, all while spawning countless mutations. Its relationship with jazz has withstood each era, less popular but just as potent, thanks to standout music from Madlib, the Roots, J Dilla and the Beatnuts. But it took Lamar and that small brotherhood of L.A. jazz players to bring it back to the forefront.

• • •

To Pimp a Butterfly pulls off the difficult task of sounding like every great black album we've heard and nothing else in existence. That was accomplished largely because the collective

went into the studio with no thought of competing with the top 10 or with their peers. "We were influenced by all the greats, from Sly Stone to Miles Davis to Herbie Hancock to Quincy Jones to Dr. Dre to Too $hort," Martin says. "As far as the concept, we were inspired more by life and what was going on around us than we were by music."

"WE WERE INFLUENCED BY ALL THE GREATS, FROM SLY STONE TO MILES DAVIS TO TOO $HORT."

Recorded over nearly two years, *Butterfly* tackles everything from police brutality to self-hate, depression to fame. Lamar taps into a vulnerability that is uncommon in rap, and the music matches his radical openness—largely because the players themselves were dealing with seismic changes. In a six-day period, Martin almost lost his father to a heart attack, and Zane Musa, a good friend and fellow L.A. musician, died suddenly.

"He was one of the top three saxophone players in the world, technically way better than me or Kamasi will ever probably be," Martin says. "We didn't have time to pop bottles and turn up while making the album. All we had time to do was pray and be obedient to the art, because that's the only way we could heal."

Lamar banked his 11 Grammy nominations—a number second only to Michael Jackson's in the award's history—on the strength of an album that is unapologetically jazz-inflected and socially aware. In an interview with *The New York Times,* Lamar said he wanted to win all of them. "It's not only a statement for myself, but it's a statement for the culture. They're all important because of the foundation the forefathers laid before me. Nas didn't get a chance to be in that position. Pac. So to be acknowledged and to actually win, it's for all of them." On the big night, he secured five trophies: four for songs from *Butterfly* and one for best music video, shared with Taylor Swift, for "Bad Blood," on which he's featured. (He lost the album of the year award to Swift.)

Washington, Martin and Thundercat, on the other hand, have all told the press that they don't care about the nominations. Thundercat contents himself with the oblique light that *Butterfly* manages to shine on jazz. "They almost put that motherfucker in the jazz category," he says, laughing hysterically. "He got Grammys for parking, going to the vending machine—he got Grammys for having the most braids."

• • •

Washington and Thundercat's own work, though critically acclaimed, did not garner a single Grammy nod. It's no surprise the staunchly traditional committee bypassed Thundercat's *The Beyond/Where the Giants Roam* EP. While the Grammys have attempted to stay relevant, particularly by featuring an explosive performance by Lamar, the jazz category is woefully out of touch. With the exception of Esperanza Spalding, there hasn't been a Grammy winner in the jazz categories under 50 years of age in decades.

What's not as easily explained is how Washington's solo debut, *The Epic,* was left out. The triple-disc album landed on nearly every 2015 best-of list. It took Washington from being an obscure player who wrote and performed on Lamar's album to a bona fide star in the jazz world and beyond. *The Epic* has made jazz fans out of people who hated or ignored the genre.

The snub puts Washington in good company. "I didn't let it upset me, but I can't say I wasn't surprised at not getting nominated," he says. "So much good music has been overlooked for so long, and so many cool things have come from *The Epic,* that I can't really be mad."

Washington was sidelined after he broke his ankle during a November 2015 tour stop in Europe. That downtime gave him the opportunity to write sheaves of new music, which he hopes to record between a full slate of shows this year—including Coachella. To put this in perspective, a straight-ahead jazz musician playing the hipster-friendly festival is as rare as Michael Jackson popping up at Hot 97's Summer Jam (which actually happened; google it).

Martin is currently working on albums for Compton rapper YG and for Lamar's Top Dawg labelmate Schoolboy Q—not to mention Martin's idol Herbie Hancock. He recently released his solo album *Velvet Portraits,* which features Snoop Dogg, Lalah Hathaway and Martin's father, Curly, on drums.

Thundercat says he and Pittsburgh rapper Mac Miller have written several albums' worth of material together, including straight jazz. He's also figuring out where to place a few songs recorded with Wiz Khalifa. Thundercat's supergroup WOKE, which includes L.A. producer Flying Lotus (he of the apocalyptic 2014 album *You're Dead!*) and experimental hip-hop duo Shabazz Palaces, will release more of its psychedelic disco funk this year.

"The fact that as a musician you can make music speaking from your heart that doesn't have to be widely accepted on a commercial level—that is kind of a new sentiment," says Washington. "I think that alone will definitely inspire the younger generation to at least try harder. They have the opportunity to go in; we had to fight our way."

In early March, Lamar, almost without warning, released an eight-song collection of outtakes from the *Butterfly* sessions. The surprise album has verses from his recent television performances as well as ideas formed in the studio that had yet to be fully fleshed out. Despite being announced only hours before the release date, *untitled unmastered* immediately shot to the top of the iTunes and Billboard 200 charts.

Most artists would be apprehensive about opening their process to potential copycats, but these guys seem to know deep down that the alchemy behind *Butterfly,* as urgent as it may be, is part of something greater. Martin recalls, "When Kendrick said he was gonna put the jams out, I said, 'You're gonna put our secrets out? You're gonna put the blueprint out?' He said, 'Yeah, man, we got a new blueprint.' So that was that." ■

Bruner (bass guitar), Martin (sax, middle), Washington (sax, right) and friends performing in Los Angeles last year.

Big Brother Wants to Be Your Friend

The social media presence of our government's intelligence agencies is hilariously upbeat and quietly insidious. Welcome to the new wave of friendly propaganda

BY **CHADWICK MOORE**

The CIA joined the social media age in 2014 by blasting out the satirical message "We can neither confirm nor deny that this is our first tweet." That inaugural post to Twitter, retweeted more than 300,000 times, was followed by CIA director John Brennan announcing the agency's new social media strategy. "We have important insights to share, and we want to make sure that unclassified information about the agency is more accessible," he said in a press release. Those insights have since included photos of vintage spy gear, a tweet reading "No, we don't know where Tupac is" and the agency wishing itself a happy birthday with a patriotic cupcake. The agency and the media have found it adorable.

"The CIA is scary and involved in undemocratic things, so they have to represent themselves as innocent, open, liberal and tolerant," says Jason Stanley, a Yale philosophy professor and author of *How Propaganda Works*. "It's tough having a terrifying security apparatus like the CIA in a democratic state."

The public's trust in the U.S. government has been declining for the past decade. Last year, only 16 percent of Americans said they trusted officials in Washington, D.C. "most of the time," according to the Pew Research Center.

Edward Snowden's 2013 leak of the National Security Agency's domestic spying programs (subject of Oliver Stone's in-the-works film *Snowden*) and the recent standoff between Apple and the FBI over iPhone security safeguards have heightened concern that the U.S. is turning into a surveillance state. Brennan's seeming goal is to quell that fear with a steady stream of information (a.k.a. "transparency") on social media, however vapid that information may be.

The CIA isn't the only wing of our vast domestic-security brigade that is now on social media, mushrooming over amber waves of grain like the Eye of Sauron, but these accounts are hardly informative. On Facebook and Twitter, the NSA posts regular "CryptoChallenge" and "Puzzle Periodical" games. It also wished some 50,000 Twitter followers a happy National High-Five Day last year (the third Thursday of every April, apparently), introduced its recycling mascot (a cartoon plastic bin named Dunk) and shared Facebook posts from an intern who praised the agency and her job ("a huge amount of cybersecurity knowledge isn't necessary," one reads).

Breeze through the Transportation Security Administration's Instagram account, followed by more than 400,000 people, and you'll see a concerted effort to squash its reputation as the jeering, panties-fondling face of Homeland Security at your airport check-in. Every day the agency posts photos of things confiscated at airports across the nation—assault rifles, brass knuckles, grenades, human remains, pink bejeweled lipstick tasers, sticks of dynamite, antitank artillery shells, stun guns and ninja throwing stars—all while maintaining a cheeky Mary Poppins–like attitude toward the whole business.

"#TSAGoodCatch," begins one caption. "All of these items (one firearm, 11 rounds of ammo, two flares, 18 knives and two hatchets) were discovered in one traveler's carry-on bag yesterday at the Kansas City International Airport (MCI). #Nope."

"TSA is using social media to battle the usual complaint: Why is security screening at airports so ridiculous?" says Shama Hyder, who runs the Marketing Zen Group, a public relations firm specializing in digital media. "Now TSA can point to these images and say, 'This is why.' "

Last year, according to the TSA, it discovered more than 2,600 firearms—nearly 83 percent of them loaded—at U.S. airports. That equates to about seven a day. Yet a 2015 internal review conducted by undercover investigators revealed that a staggering 95 percent of attempts to smuggle weapons and explosives through security were successful. The findings were so alarming that the secretary of the Department of Homeland Security reassigned the TSA's acting administrator to a new post.

"A complaint you often hear about these agencies is they're very silo-ed. Transparency can't be faked on social media—at least not for long," says Hyder. "I'd love to sit down with these organizations and ask, 'What are you really trying to do here?' "

I attempted to do just that, requesting interviews with the TSA, NSA and CIA, as well as the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, which oversees all three, but I was denied or ignored every time. And so we don't know whether these accounts are run by credentialed government officials or part-time millennial interns. What is known, however, is that the government's seemingly unaudited presence on social media is completely legal, thanks to an obscure law.

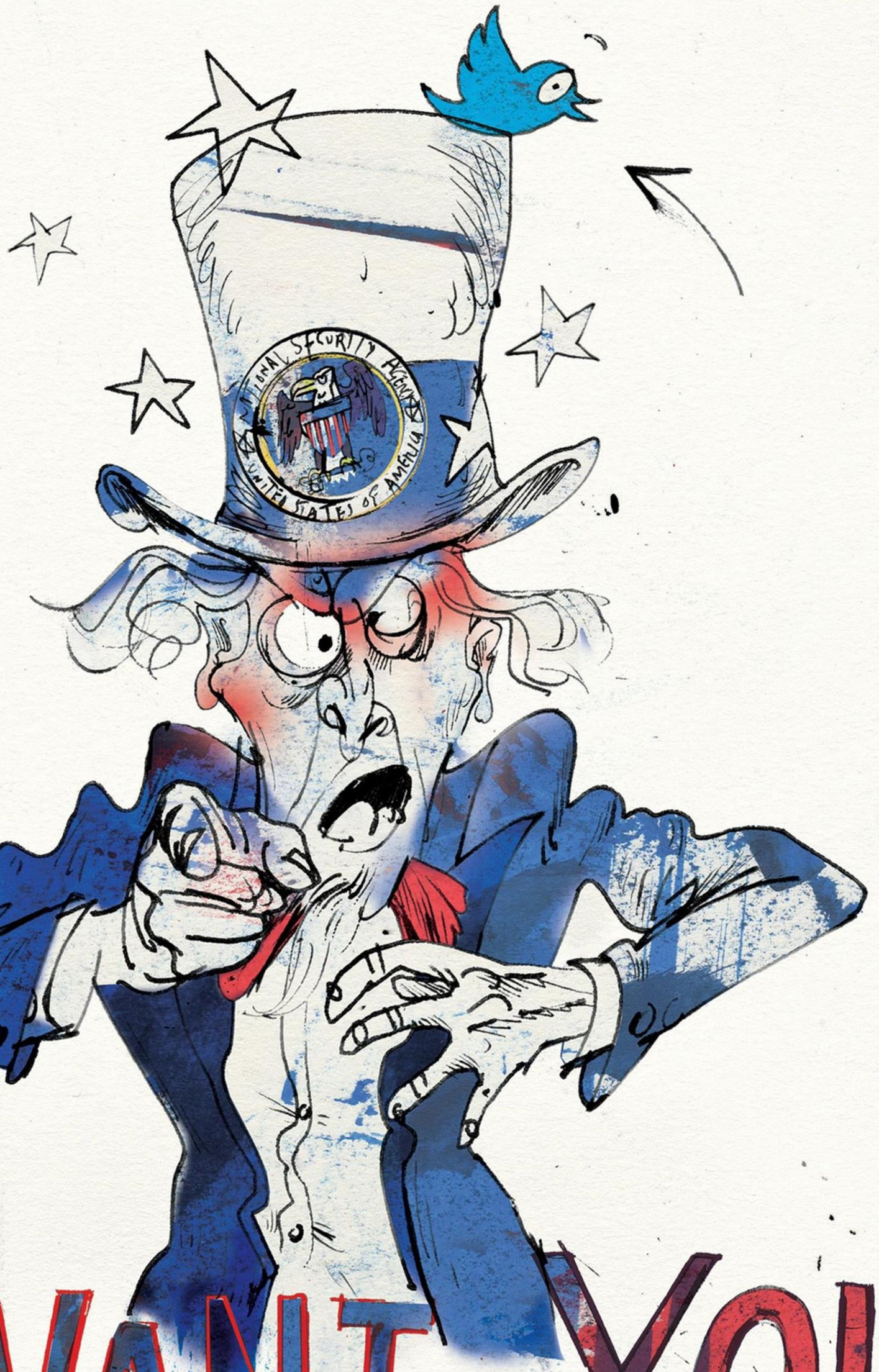
About four years ago, Congress passed the Smith-Mundt Modernization Act of 2012 and opened the gates for the government to communicate anything it chooses to the American public, including by way of social media. The original legislation, in effect since the 1940s, prohibited the government from targeting U.S. citizens with the propaganda it aimed at other nations. Such campaigns were abundant at the height of the Cold War, when the CIA propped up modern artists and pushed for civil rights legislation in the interest of showcasing the benefits of our open society. The 2012 update of Smith-Mundt got rid of that prohibition, citing new technologies, and authorized "the domestic dissemination of information and material about the United States intended primarily for foreign audiences."

"There's no pressure on the U.S. to not act like China and Russia," says Stanley. "We have a multibillion-dollar security state, and all these people have wives and kids. They're self-interested in creating the groundwork for fear and risk in order to keep the government money flowing in. What's bad is when you start acting like a totalitarian state and cutting critiques to make everything seem perfect. That never works."

The way to promote our society, Stanley says, is not through tongue-in-cheek posturing on the internet but by "allowing whistleblowers to flourish, to walk on the street, to not be thrown in prison."

Speaking of whistle-blowers, last September Snowden finally joined Twitter, gaining more than a million followers overnight. He opted to follow only one account, however: @NSAGov. It's safe to say Snowden shouldn't expect a tweet about citizen surveillance or wiretapping anytime soon. Instead, he'll probably get a meme of a cute kitten waving the American flag, wishing him a happy Memorial Day. ■

ILLUSTRATION BY SIMON SPILSBURY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PRESIDENTIAL MATING SEASON

From "bimbo eruptions" to Project Goldfish, the search for a vice president is strategic, complicated and messy

BY **JOHN MERONEY**

Cloistered in a brick colonial house off Embassy Row in Washington, D.C. and high atop Trump Tower in Manhattan, the presumptive presidential nominees are now struggling with the first momentous decision voters will see them make: the selection of a running mate.

As Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump continue to fight for delegates in the remaining primaries, behind the scenes their campaigns have transitioned to a new, secret phase that will reveal what kind of president they might be. In 1976, when a one-term governor from Georgia named Jimmy Carter landed the Democratic nomination, he was unknown to most of the country. But he chose a respected U.S. senator, Walter F. Mondale of Minnesota, as his running mate. "It sent a powerful message that Carter was going to make sound, sensible decisions," says longtime Democratic strategist Bill Carrick, who has worked in two veep-selection cycles.

Carrick and others who have been integral to similar operations sketch out scenarios in which the leading candidates will hunker down with a tiny core of lawyers, public relations specialists and even private investigators, all of them tasked with finding the "right" individual to serve as VP. They will vacuum every detail of a candidate's life, from bank balances to anyone they may be schtupping, to make sure there are no secrets that could derail the campaign.

In 2000, the man George W. Bush tasked with leading the search for Republicans, Dick Cheney, selected himself. Four years ago, when Mitt Romney challenged President Barack Obama, he cast a wide net with his Project Goldfish, named for his staffers' affinity for the snack crackers. Romney started with 24 candidates and worked his way down to the finalists, who were given code names; Governor Chris Christie of New Jersey was known as Pufferfish. (Romney had a fondness for making fun of overweight people, as reported by John Heilemann and Mark Halperin. When he saw an obese woman he would joke to male aides, "There's your date for tonight.") Romney kept his files locked in waterproof safes inside offices that required PINs to enter.

This process should be familiar to Clinton. In 1992, when Bill was running for president, he even vetted himself by hiring private detective Jack Palladino to get a jump on the women with whom Bill had had affairs in case they caused him trouble down the line—the "bimbo eruptions," as they were known in the Clinton campaign. Hillary's operation is probably more high-toned, with lawyers from the D.C. firm Williams & Connolly reviewing dossiers of candidates who have been poll-tested and focus-grouped.

Trump should know how to hire a number two after starring on *The Apprentice* for 14 seasons. Trump's friend Roger Stone, the Republican consultant who exposed New York governor Eliot Spitzer's penchant for prostitutes, insists that the billionaire's approach to finding a veep will be unorthodox. "Nothing's in and nothing's out," Stone says. "People think Trump is Machiavellian, but he's really not. He's flying totally by the seat of his pants."

Even with that, the presidential nominees will ask whether a prospective veep can deliver votes. In 1960, Democrat John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts picked Senate Majority Leader Lyndon B. Johnson of Texas because Johnson was a national figure with a powerful political machine. But there's no one with LBJ's sway on the scene today, so the idea of a veep pick who can deliver a state as Johnson did is fantasy. Romney's advisors believed that by selecting Paul D. Ryan (now Speaker of the House), they had a chance to turn Wisconsin Republican. But Obama won 53 percent of the vote there. Ryan couldn't even carry his home county, where he was clobbered by almost 25 points.

"So the nominee ends up saying, 'Maybe I should just figure out what kind of vice president someone might be and how much help they could be in the White House,'" explains Carrick. Or, to paraphrase Richard Nixon, nobody can help you. Just find someone who won't hurt you.

Smart nominees will use their veep selection to compensate for their own weaknesses. For Clinton that means finding someone who will blunt her association with business-as-usual Washington and Wall Street. She also needs someone who will galvanize millennials as Bernie Sanders has. "That's the big chunk of the Obama coalition that she desperately wants," Carrick says.

Trump has to decide whether he wants to try to make nice with those in the party who loathe him for his opposition to interventionist wars, open borders and globalism—staples of Bush Republicanism and the neoconservative faction. Trump's stated plan is to get a veep with deep political experience. In that vein, a strong choice would be a governor from a big swing state, such as Rick Scott of Florida or Trump's opponent for the GOP nomination John Kasich of Ohio. Then he'll pray that the state swings Trump's way. "But if he picks Kasich," says Stone, "Trump would need a food taster...and yes, that was on the record." ■

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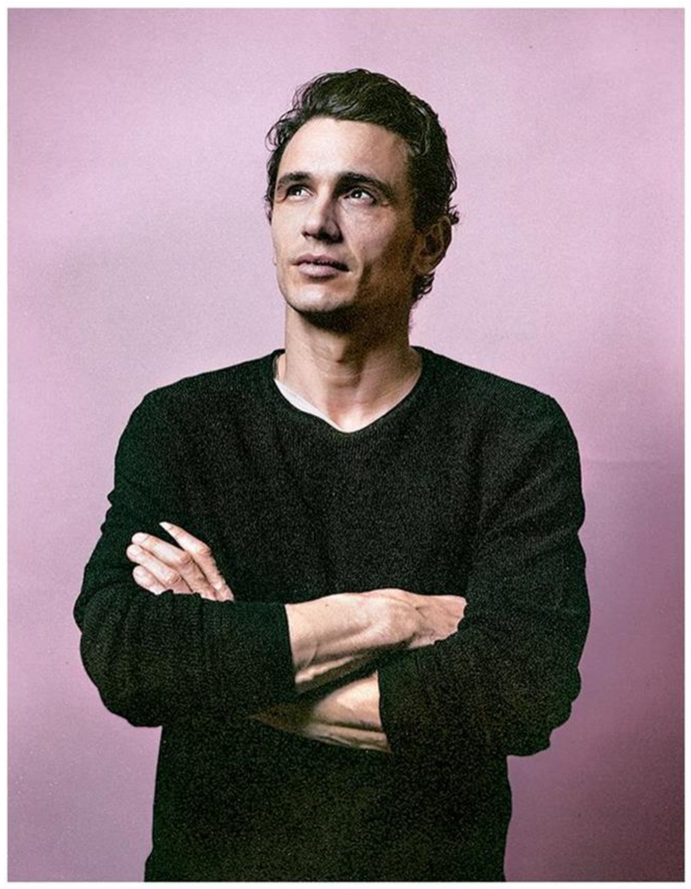
FRANCOFILE

*A conversation with director **Wes Anderson** on J.D. Salinger, Owen Wilson, James Caan and the art of letting life lead the way*



BY
JAMES FRANCO

JAMES FRANCO: You grew up in Houston and went to school at the University of Texas at Austin, where you studied philosophy. How did you end up making movies?

WES ANDERSON: I studied philosophy, but I wanted to make movies. The two big things for me when I went to the University of Texas were that it had a big, great library of movie books—and, at that time, VHS tapes and laser discs—which I spent a lot of time going through from A to Z. And I met Owen Wilson.

FRANCO: You and Owen wrote *Bottle Rocket* together in college. How did that come about?

ANDERSON: We were tinkering with it and rehearsing it for years. We didn't have a camera, and we didn't have any film, but we were trying to do it anyway. We met some people who had equipment; one was a director of photography and had a 16-millimeter camera. We borrowed money, got some film stock and sort of cobbled together a little film production. We started shooting the movie. We made a schedule to shoot the first five minutes and then the next five minutes and then the next five minutes. We were going to make the movie in installments because we couldn't wait any longer; we needed to start doing it.

FRANCO: I sense the influence of J.D. Salinger in your movies. In *Bottle Rocket,* Luke Wilson is coming out of an institution and has a little flavor of Holden Caulfield. The Max character in *Rushmore* could be a distant cousin to Salinger's famous Glass children. The same with *The Royal Tenenbaums.* Was Salinger or anyone else a literary influence?

ANDERSON: When Owen and I met we were movie buffs, but we really met in the creative writing program at the University of Texas. We were writing short stories, and what we first talked about together, really, was books and writers—and Salinger was certainly someone we both loved. Raymond Carver was another big one, and F. Scott Fitzgerald. A big part of our getting to know each other was helping each other write short stories, and those stories were probably all influenced by these writers.

FRANCO: Music also plays a big role in your movies. The music in *Rushmore* stands out; you brought it in in such a way that it really works into the scenes. The music in *The Life Aquatic With Steve Zissou* becomes almost as much of the story as anything else. Who influenced that?

ANDERSON: Probably Robert Altman and Hal Ashby. Martin Scorsese reinvented how music was being used in movies. And Mike Nichols. How the music fits into *The Graduate* is special. In some quantifiable way, music is a big part of a movie. I always feel I want to get the advantage of it.

FRANCO: You have a very specific style that you plan out. How do you get actors to do what you want without it becoming stiff?

ANDERSON: There's not a lot of improvised dialogue in the movies I've been doing lately, but I usually don't know what the actors are going to do. They're sort of improvising everything but the dialogue—how they're going to say it, how they're going to play it. But I have such a lack of perspective about what it's like to work on someone else's movie versus working on one of my own. I've spent so little time on anyone else's set. When we were doing *Bottle Rocket,* we'd never been on a movie set before. It was me, Owen and Luke, and we just filmed it the way we thought. James Caan arrived when we were doing the first scene and said to me, "You understand that this is not how it's done, right? What we do is, we come to the set, we rehearse the scene, we block the scene and figure it out, then we go back to trailers, you light the scene, we come back and you shoot it." What I had done was set up the cameras, lit the scene, brought in the actors, told them where to move, and then we shot it. He thought it was crazy. And you know, I still do it that way to some degree.

FRANCO: You now live in Paris. Does that environment inspire how you approach your work?

ANDERSON: Sometimes I feel like my own experiences lead me into a kind of story. It's someplace where I want to have a certain kind of experience. Our movie *The Darjeeling Limited,* for instance. One part of it was me, Jason Schwartzman and Roman Coppola being together in a certain kind of moment in our lives, feeling some kind of crisis that we may have just been imagining, but we were kind of embracing it. And I wanted to go to India. I wanted to work in India; I wanted to see what it was like and spend time there. The thing that appeals to me is that the part of my life that I get to use in the movies *is* the movies. The experience of making a movie forms the next one. That's what I wanted to do; that's what I want to do. It's something I'm happy about. ■

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVE MA

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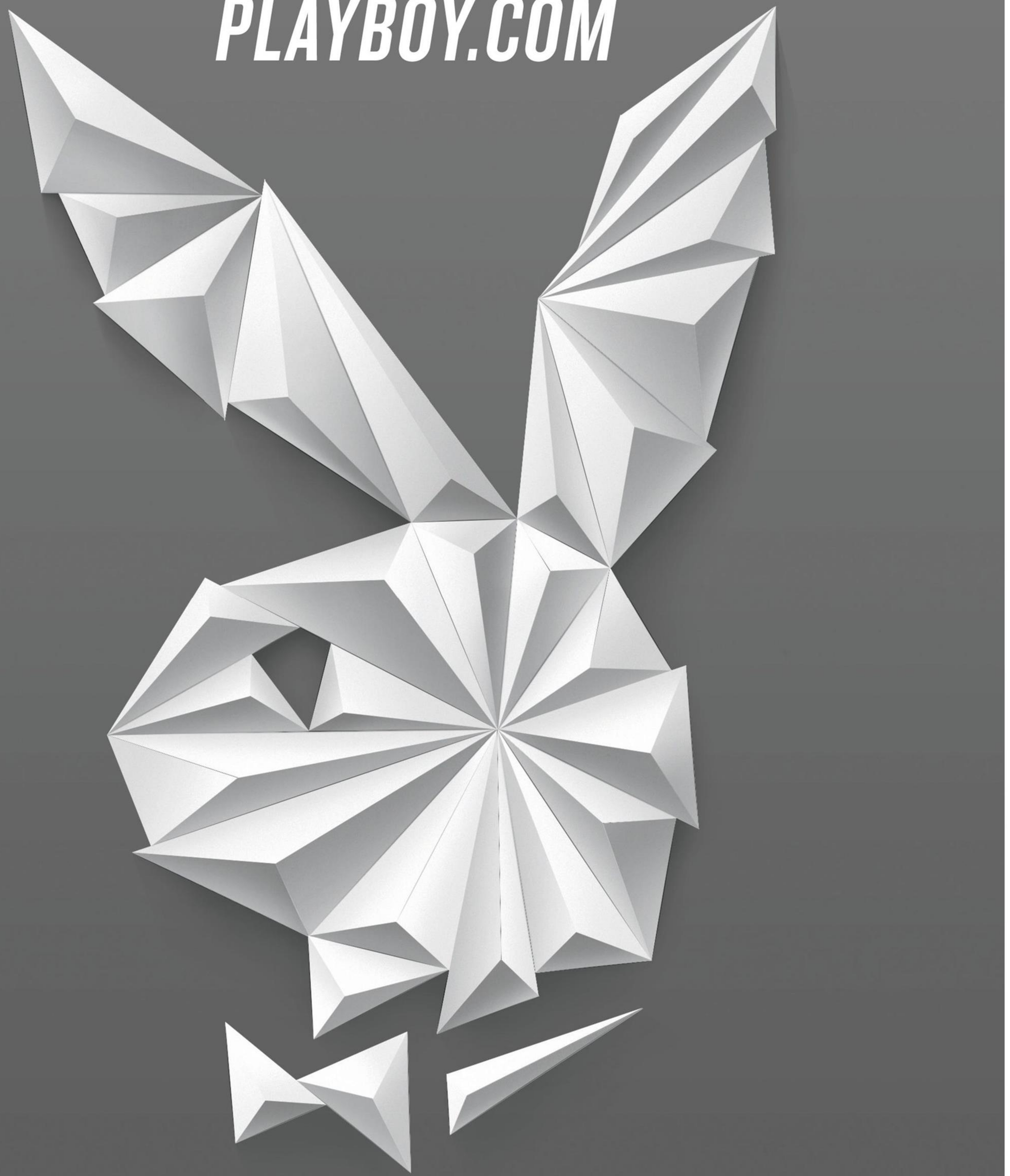


YOU'RE WELCOME.

RAY KURZWEIL

Many think author, inventor and data scientist Ray Kurzweil is a prophet for our digital age. A few say he's completely nuts. Kurzweil, who heads a team of more than 40 as Google's director of engineering, believes advances in technology and medicine are pushing us toward what he calls the Singularity, a period of profound cultural and evolutionary change in which computers will outthink the brain and allow people—you, me, the guy with the man-bun ahead of you at Starbucks—to live forever. He dates this development at 2045. ¶ Raymond Kurzweil was born February 12, 1948, and he still carries the plain, nasal inflection of his native Queens, New York. His Jewish parents escaped Hitler's Austria, but Kurzweil grew up attending a Unitarian church. He worshipped knowledge above all, and computers in particular.

His grandmother was one of the first women in Europe to earn a Ph.D. in chemistry. His uncle, who worked at Bell Labs, taught Ray computer science in the 1950s, and by the age of 15, Kurzweil was designing programs to help do homework. Two years later, he wrote code to analyze and create music in the style of various famous composers. The program won him the prestigious Westinghouse Science Talent Search, a prize that got the 17-year-old an invitation to the White House. That year, on the game show *I've Got a Secret,* Kurzweil pressed some buttons on a data processor the size of a small car. It coughed out original sheet music that could have been written by Brahms.

After earning degrees in computer science and creative writing at MIT, he began to sell his inventions, including the first optical character recognition system that could read text in any normal font. Kurzweil knew a "reading machine" could help the blind, but to make it work, he first had to invent a text-to-speech synthesizer, as well as a flatbed scanner; both are still in wide use. In the 1980s Kurzweil created the first electronic music keyboard to replicate the sound of a grand piano and many other instruments. If you've ever been to a rock concert, you've likely seen the name Kurzweil on the back of a synthesizer.

These days, Kurzweil plays the role of tech oracle to the Silicon Valley elite. His best-selling titles *The Age of Intelligent Machines* and *The Singularity Is Near* offer eerily specific forecasts on artificial intelligence, biotechnology and human evolution. Much of his work sounds like science fiction, but Kurzweil rationally lays out his vision at symposia, college lectures and confabs such as SXSW and TED.

At 68, Kurzweil has his fingers in many pots. He co-founded Singularity University, a research institute and think tank that focuses on how science can solve humanity's challenges involving water scarcity, overpopulation and energy shortfalls. His Google team is developing tools for machine intelligence and natural language understanding, including a series of "chatbots" that can converse with you and have different personalities. In his spare time, Kurzweil started a hedge fund and just finished his first novel. He is a husband, father and grandfather.

Contributing Editor **David Hochman,** who last interviewed Rachel Maddow for PLAYBOY, spent extended time in San Francisco with Kurzweil. "Talking to Ray is a little like chatting with Einstein, Mr. Spock and the Google guys all at once," Hochman says. "His intelligence is off the charts. He knows everything about everything, and it's all filtered through the lens of whatever's at the forefront of the wired world." Kurzweil, who wore a Google watch on one wrist and a Mickey Mouse watch on the other, spoke for hours with his gaze fixed on the middle distance, as if he were in a kind of trance, Hochman says. The biggest surprise? "We were together for two days, and Ray didn't check his e-mail or text messages once."

PLAYBOY: You describe a near future in which nanobots inhabit our bloodstreams, our brains upload to the cloud and people never die. It sounds terrifying.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **ALEX FREUND**

KURZWEIL: When people talk about the future of technology, especially artificial intelligence, they very often have the common dystopian Hollywood-movie model of us versus the machines. My view is that we will use these tools as we've used all other tools—to broaden our reach. And in this case, we'll be extending the most important attribute we have, which is our intelligence.

The capability of information technology doubles each year. At the same time, the price of the same functionality comes down by half every year. These are all features of what I call the law of accelerating returns. It's why you can buy an iPhone or an Android phone that's twice as good as the one two years ago for half the price. My smartphone is several thousand times more powerful and millions of times less expensive than the $11 million IBM 7094 computer I used when I was an undergraduate at MIT in 1965. But that's not the most interesting thing about my phone. If I want to multiply computational and communication power by 10,000—that is to say, if I need to access 10,000 computers—I can do that in the cloud, and that happens all the time. We're not even aware of it. Do a complex language translation, a complex search or many other types of transactions, and you're accessing thousands of computers while you sit quietly in a park somewhere. Over the next couple of decades we're going to make ourselves smarter by integrating with these tools.

PLAYBOY: Humans are evolving into iPhones?

KURZWEIL: We're merging with these nonbiological technologies. We're already on that path. I mean, this little Android phone I'm carrying on my belt is not yet inside my physical body, but that's an arbitrary distinction. It is part of who I am—not necessarily the phone itself, but the connection to the cloud and all the resources I can access there.

PLAYBOY: Isn't what nature gave us enough?

KURZWEIL: We have limited capacity in our brain. It's at least a million times slower than computational electronics. The part of our brain where we do our thinking is called the neocortex. It's a very thin structure around the brain that emerged 200 million years ago with mammals, which were rodent creatures. The big innovation came 2 million years ago when humanoids evolved and developed a large forehead. If you look at other primates, they have a slanted brow. They don't have a frontal cortex. That additional amount of neocortex is what we used to add higher levels of abstraction, and that was the enabling factor for us to invent, first of all, language, but also things like humor and music. No other animal can keep a beat. No other animal can tell a joke.

PLAYBOY: So plugging our brains into machines will make us exponentially smarter and more charming?

KURZWEIL: Exactly. By the 2030s we will have nanobots that can go into a brain noninvasively through the capillaries, connect to our neocortex and basically connect it to a synthetic neocortex that works the same way in the cloud. So we'll have an additional neocortex, just like we developed an additional neocortex 2 million years ago, and we'll use it just as we used the frontal cortex: to add additional levels of abstraction. We'll create more profound forms of communication than we're familiar with today, more profound music and funnier jokes. We'll be funnier. We'll be sexier. We'll be more adept at expressing loving sentiments.

WE'RE STARTING TO REPROGRAM THE OUTDATED SOFTWARE OF LIFE.

PLAYBOY: What exactly will that look like from the user end?

KURZWEIL: Let's say I'm walking along and I see my boss at Google, Larry Page, approaching. I have three seconds to come up with something clever to say, and the 300 million modules in my neocortex won't cut it. I need a billion modules for two seconds. I'll be able to access that in the cloud just as we can access additional computation in the cloud for our mobile phones, and I'll be able to say exactly the right thing.

But the truth is, we don't know what it will look like. Once we can expand our thinking in the cloud, our intelligence grows beyond anything we can currently comprehend. Our intuition about the future is linear. It's hardwired in our brains that way. Ten thousand years ago you would track an animal in the field and expect it to speed up as it went along. You would make a linear prediction as to where it would go so you could catch it. That type of thinking made sense, but it ignores the sort of exponential growth we see with technology. We're approaching a point where technological progress will become so fast that everyday human intelligence will be unable to follow it. It's a horizon past which the concepts we're familiar with are so transformed that it's hard to see past it.

PLAYBOY: This is the event horizon you call the Singularity. Why have you set its arrival so specifically in 2045?

KURZWEIL: The nonbiological intelligence created in that year will reach a level that's a billion times more powerful than all human intelligence today. But there will be dramatic changes prior to that. I've been consistent about these dates for decades now. One is 2029, which is when computers will pass a valid Turing test, meaning they'll be indistinguishable from human intelligence in a conversation.

PLAYBOY: How will all this help us live longer?

KURZWEIL: Let's start with genetics, which is now called biotechnology. It's beginning to revolutionize clinical practice and will completely transform medicine within one to two decades. We're starting to reprogram the outdated software of life—the 23,000 little programs we have in our bodies, called genes. We're programming them away from disease and away from aging.

For instance, at the Joslin Diabetes Center, they turned off the fat insulin receptor gene that tells you to hold on to every calorie in your fat cells. That was a good idea 10,000 years ago when our genes evolved, because the next hunting season might not work out so well. But today it underlies an epidemic of obesity, diabetes and heart disease. We'd like to turn that gene off. They tried it in animal experiments.

The animals ate ravenously but remained slim. They didn't get diabetes. They didn't get heart disease. They also lived 20 percent longer. And that's just one example of 23,000 genes.

We're involved with a company where we add a gene to people who are missing a gene that causes a terminal disease called pulmonary hypertension, and the treatment has actually worked in human trials. We can subtract genes. We can modify stem cells to have desirable effects such as rejuvenating the heart if it's been damaged in a heart attack, which is true of half of all heart attack survivors.

The point is health care is now an information technology subject to the same laws of acceleration and progress we see with other technologies. We'll soon have the ability to rejuvenate all the body's tissues and organs and develop drugs targeted specifically at the underlying metabolic process of a disease rather than taking a hit-or-miss approach. But nanotechnology is where we really move beyond biology.

PLAYBOY: Tiny robots fighting disease in our veins?

KURZWEIL: Yes. By the 2020s we'll start using nanobots to complete the job of the immune system. Our immune system is great, but it evolved thousands of years ago when conditions were different. It was not in the interest of the human species for individuals to live very long, so people typically died in their 20s. The life expectancy was 19. Your immune system, for example, does a poor job on cancer. It thinks cancer is you. It doesn't treat cancer as an enemy. It also doesn't work well on retroviruses. It doesn't work well on things that tend to affect us later in life, because it didn't select for longevity.

We can finish the job nature started with a nonbiological T cell. T cells are, in fact, nanobots—natural ones. They're the size of a blood cell and are quite intelligent. I actually watched one of my T cells attack bacteria on a microscope slide. We could have one programmed to deal with all pathogens and could download new software from the internet if a new type of enemy such as a new biological virus emerged.

As they gain traction in the 2030s, nanobots in the bloodstream will destroy pathogens, remove debris, rid our bodies of clots, clogs and tumors, correct DNA errors and actually reverse the aging process. One researcher has already cured type 1 diabetes in rats with a blood-cell-size device.

PLAYBOY: So if we can hang on for 15 more years, we can basically live forever?

KURZWEIL: I believe we will reach a point around 2029 when medical technologies will add one additional year every year to your life expectancy. By that I don't mean life expectancy based on your birthdate but rather your remaining life expectancy.

PLAYBOY: That's a lot of *Friends* reruns. Won't we get bored?

KURZWEIL: Ennui is certainly one of the challenges. If we're doing the same things for hundreds of years, life will become profoundly monotonous. But that's true only if we have radical life extension without radical life expansion. So we're going to make ourselves smarter, as we're doing already, but as we directly merge with this technology and expand our thinking into the cloud, we're going to be adding more levels of abstraction to our thinking.

Just as we went from primates to humans and invented art, music and science, with that additional neocortex we're going to be adding even more profound forms of communication and more profound activities as we, again, add to the levels and scope of our neocortex. We're going to have fantastic virtual environments. We can enjoy any earthly environment, but we'll also have fantastic imaginary environments limited only by our imaginations, and our imaginations are going to become greater.

By the 2030s, you and I could be hundreds of miles apart, and it will seem just as though we're sitting together as we are now—there are even technologies that will enable us to touch one another. I actually have some patents on that. Facebook's $2 billion acquisition of Oculus Rift is just one harbinger of the coming era of virtual reality. Today the technology is not quite realistic, but by the mid-2020s, with retina-based devices transmitting images directly to your retina, similar devices in your ears and other sensors that stimulate the tactile sense, you and I could be in different locations and yet feel completely as though we're both at a table in the Taj Mahal or walking on a virtual Mediterranean beach, feeling the moist warm air on our faces.

By the 2030s this technology will go inside the nervous system. I mentioned nanobots that will connect your neocortex to the cloud. Another application will be to send signals directly to your neocortex as though they're coming from your senses. So your brain will feel like it's actually in the virtual environment. It's going to be extremely realistic and incorporate all the senses.

PLAYBOY: Sex often leads the way in technology. It sounds like the future will see plenty of innovation on that front.

KURZWEIL: Yes. Early adoption of new communication technologies often involves sexual applications. Gutenberg's first book was the Bible, but that was followed by a lot of more prurient titles. The same thing happened with film, videotape, the internet and products such as *Second Life,* which was an early attempt at virtual reality and has a large adult sexual-interest section. And as virtual reality becomes more realistic, certainly sexual activity will be extremely popular.

PLAYBOY: How do you envision the future of sex?

KURZWEIL: Not only will people be able to have sex together in different locations, but you will have the ability to change who you are and who your partner is. In virtual reality you don't have to inhabit the same body you have in actual reality. A couple could become each other, for example, and experience the relationship from the other's perspective. You could transmit a more idealized version of yourself to your lover, or she may alter how she wants you to look.

PLAYBOY: So looking normal won't be an option for sexual partners of the future? We'll all be super-idealized physical forms?

KURZWEIL: I think we'll expand our concept of what's normal. I mean, we're doing that already. People are doing things to their bodies that were considered radical some decades ago and are now considered mainstream, like tattoos and piercings but also cosmetic surgery. As you go into virtual environments, some people create avatars that look very much like themselves, and other people create fantastic new types of creatures. I think our aesthetic will modify, given the freedom of virtual reality, so you won't have to be the same person all the time, but you could when you want to be.

PLAYBOY: What you're describing could change the very nature of relationships, not to mention redefine what it means to be monogamous.

KURZWEIL: We have already to some extent separated the biological function of sex from its communication, sensual and recreational purposes. You can certainly have sex without having babies, and you can even have babies without having sex. In virtual reality we will have even more freedom to experiment.

We already have more lines to draw today than we did in the past. Is watching pornography infidelity? Well, couples disagree about that. People have different opinions. Communicating in a sexual manner over the internet, is that infidelity? Some people think yes; some people think no. If you get tired of your partner, you can turn your partner into someone else, or you can transform yourself. You'll have that option as well.

PLAYBOY: You and your wife have been married for more than 40 years. But is there anyone whose body you would like to inhabit?

KURZWEIL: That's a good question. I haven't been asked that one before. Probably some attractive woman. If I had to pick one? Amy Adams. I like the perky way she uses her body.

PLAYBOY: Fascinating. Do you have any other pop culture crushes?

KURZWEIL: [*Pauses*] Taylor Swift.

PLAYBOY: You listen to Taylor Swift?

KURZWEIL: I do. I think she's very soulful, and her voice has gotten better too. "Teardrops on My Guitar" is a pretty great song. I was hoping to meet her at the Grammys last year, but she was sitting too far away from me.

PLAYBOY: In the 1980s, you invented the Kurzweil K250 music synthesizer, the first keyboard capable of simulating the sound of a grand piano and other orchestral instruments. Stevie Wonder, Eric Clapton and Prince are among its many fans. Do you have any rock star moments to confess?

THE MOST PROFOUND LIMITATION WE HAVE IS THAT OF OUR LIFE SPAN.

KURZWEIL: Nothing too scandalous. My friendship with Stevie Wonder goes back to 1976, when he invited himself to my office to listen to the Kurzweil reading machine for the blind. My wife and I hung out with Ray Charles. More recently, Alanis Morissette approached me at an airport to thank me for the Kurzweil keyboard. It's rewarding, but I've always been shy. Unstructured social situations make me nervous.

PLAYBOY: Every generation has its defining psychological label, and armchair therapists today love throwing around the catchall terms *on the spectrum* and *Asperger's*. Some have used those terms to describe you.

KURZWEIL: I do see some social awkwardness in myself and in some of my associates who are brilliant in technology. But we're intelligent enough to compensate for that and find ways of interacting with people. I have always dreaded cocktail parties, but I've always had one good male friend and, from an early age, was able to connect one-on-one with women. I met my wife at a party and spilled red wine on her pants, which might have been intentional. I insisted that I wash it out with her leg still in it. We fell in love very quickly and got engaged within a year.

PLAYBOY: Let's move on. Your employer, Google, is a behemoth now. How does it avoid becoming the next IBM?

KURZWEIL: I think the Google leadership realizes, as do most enlightened technology leaders, that paradigms are short-lived and you have to constantly reinvent yourself. You can't ride just one paradigm and one algorithm, though the PageRank algorithm that underlies search has certainly been one of the most successful algorithms in history.

At Google we're constantly looking for new ideas and for people who can fashion new ideas and success. I run a team of more than 40 really brilliant scientists. We're working on natural-language understanding, trying to get computers to understand the meaning of documents, and it's quite an incredible team. That's actually the most important resource I have discovered at Google: the talent there.

PLAYBOY: Do you think universities will still matter a hundred years from now?

KURZWEIL: Those institutions represent a confluence of intelligent people. Good ideas come from smart minds working together. But education is changing. One of the beneficial things we'll have from technology is very high-quality learning, from preschool to graduate school, all free and all online—including interaction with teachers and fellow students. I think the principal role of education should be to encourage people at all ages to do projects and learn from those projects. The most important reality of what we call Silicon Valley is the freedom to fail. Here we call it failure of experience. You have to be an optimist to be an entrepreneur.

PLAYBOY: You certainly are optimistic. But in many ways, the world is an increasingly difficult and dangerous place. Look at the continued violence in the Middle East and the totalitarian regimes in Africa and North Korea, not to mention corruption, racism and greed.

KURZWEIL: Well, I wouldn't put all those phenomena in the same basket. Despite oppressive regimes, the consensus is actually moving in the right direction toward greater liberty, freedom and democracy. That wasn't always the philosophy of the world. I mean, there were almost no democracies 200 years ago and only a handful 100 years ago. Not every society is a perfect democracy today, but most believe it is the desirable norm we should seek.

This is the most prosperous and peaceful time in human history. If you read Steven Pinker's book *The Better Angels of Our Nature,* he documents a very profound inverse exponential in violence. Your chance of being killed hundreds of years ago was far greater than it is today because there was extreme scarcity of resources hundreds of years ago. Technology is driving progress here too. On one hand we're seeing more violence because people are capturing it on their cell phones. But that brings awareness to it. In the past, the next village could have been destroyed and you might never have heard about it.

Human life has become immeasurably better. The poor today have amenities that kings and queens didn't have one or two centuries ago, including refrigerators and toilets, not to mention computers, televisions and recorded music.

PLAYBOY: A vast digital divide separates those with access to communications technology from those without access. Won't that gap only get wider?

KURZWEIL: No. People think the world is getting poorer, but according to the World Bank, for example, poverty in Asia has been cut by 90 percent over the past 20 years because these societies have gone from primitive agrarian economies to thriving information economies. The internet is entering developing areas at a rapid rate. The kid in Africa with a smartphone has more intelligent access to information than the president of the United States did 15 years ago, and progress like that spreads very quickly. It's a radically different world than it was a generation or two ago.

PLAYBOY: We live in interesting times.

KURZWEIL: Very interesting. People say they don't want to live forever. Often their objection is that they don't want to live hundreds of years the way the quintessential 99-year-old is perceived to be living—frail or ill and on life support. First of all, that's not what we're talking about. We're talking about remaining healthy and young, actually reversing aging and being an ideal form of yourself for a long time. They also don't see how many incredible things they would witness over time—the changes, the innovations. Me, I'd like to stick around.

PLAYBOY: Last year Bill Gates said, "It seems pretty egocentric, while we still have malaria and TB, for rich people to fund things so they can live longer."

KURZWEIL: Bill Gates is completely ignoring the 50 percent deflation rate that's inherent in information technology. You did have to be wealthy to have a mobile phone 20 years ago. They didn't work very well. They did one thing, which was make phone calls, and they did it poorly, and they didn't fit in your pocket. Today there are billions of them doing a million things, and they're basically free. By the time technologies work well, they're affordable for almost everyone. By the year 2020, you won't require as much wealth in general.

PLAYBOY: We won't need money in the future?

KURZWEIL: We'll be able to survive with very little money. Not that I advocate that. Money will be important. But as we get to the 2020s, we'll be able to print out most of the material resources we need with 3-D printers and similar technologies. We'll be able to print clothing at pennies per pound, which is what 3-D printing costs, and there will be an open-source market with free designs you can download and then print out on your printer.

PLAYBOY: What about our energy and food needs?

KURZWEIL: Certainly within 20 years we'll be meeting all our energy requirements through solar and other renewables. We're awash in energy—10,000 times more than we need, from the sun—and we're going to move to these renewables not just because we're concerned about the impact on the environment but because it will be cheaper and more economic.

We know how to clean up or desalinate water using other emerging technologies, such as Dean Kamen's Slingshot water-vapor-distillation system, at very low cost, particularly if we have low-cost energy. We're going to have a vertical agriculture revolution where we'll grow food in vertical buildings, recycling all the ingredients and resources so there's no ecological impact, unlike the environmental disaster represented by factory farming. Pesticide-free fruits and vegetables done through hydroponic plants, in vitro cloned meats.

PLAYBOY: Many of your past predictions were accurate, but you got plenty wrong too. In *The Singularity Is Near* you wrote that by 2015 we would be able to depend on robots to clean our houses.

KURZWEIL: I don't think I actually said that, but if you google my predictions, you'll see I've fared quite well overall. I did an analysis of the predictions I made for 2009 in the book *The Age of Spiritual Machines,* which I wrote in the late 1990s. I made 147 predictions, and 86 percent were correct. Even some of the ones that were incorrect, like self-driving cars, were not all that incorrect. They were off by just a few years. Directionally it was pretty accurate.

PLAYBOY: Do you know what your IQ is?
KURZWEIL: It was measured when I was a child at 165, and I haven't measured it since.
PLAYBOY: Does it bother you that some people think you're crazy? Pulitzer Prize–winning science writer Douglas Hofstadter compared your work to "dog excrement."
KURZWEIL: I think that particular statement reflects poorly on him. The difference between myself and my critics is that we're looking at the same reality, but they apply their linear intuition about where we will go, and I'm thinking about it from the exponential perspective. The good news is, the evidence for my position is everywhere around us. I gave a speech not too long ago to junior high school science winners from around the country, and they came up afterward and said, "Oh, that's really so true. Things were so different when I was eight." [*laughs*] People are seeing the results of exponential growth because you don't have to wait that long now to actually see it unfold.
PLAYBOY: Other critics call you a utopian dreamer. Not to put a damper on things, but what is to stop darker forces from using the technologies you describe and putting society in grave peril?
KURZWEIL: First of all, my view of the future is not utopian. There will always be problems. Privacy is a big issue, for instance. But in some ways, privacy is getting better too. I grew up in an era when you couldn't have a private phone conversation: You didn't know who was listening in on the line, because there were other extensions. Today, communication is private, and even the occasional intrusions are fairly benign. I run into very few people, if any, who tell me their lives were ruined by some invasion of privacy. That's not to say it's not a serious concern, as some large companies have discovered. But so far, encryption is advancing more rapidly than the technologies of decryption.
PLAYBOY: What about bioterrorism?
KURZWEIL: It's a concern. If a bioterrorist releases a new biological virus, that's a serious danger. But we can combat it. I was in the Army Science Advisory Group, and my issue was protecting ourselves against bioterrorism. Today we have a rapid-response system. We can sequence a virus almost instantly.

That's another example of exponential growth: HIV took five years to sequence; SARS took 31 days. We can now do it in one day. So we can then very quickly create either an RNA-interference-based medication or an antigen-based vaccine and spread protection quickly if there were an outbreak. This is part of the protocol that emerged from the Asilomar Conference, which established guidelines and ethical standards for responsible practitioners, as well as a rapid-response system just in case.
PLAYBOY: Could hackers shut down the internet with computer viruses?
KURZWEIL: Early on, it was predicted that software viruses, which were just then emerging, would ultimately become so powerful they would render the internet useless, and part of that prediction came true. Software viruses did become very sophisticated and powerful, but we also have a technological immune system that detects new viruses and semiautomatically reverse-engineers them and puts out antidotes that are spread virally on the internet in the form of antiviral software. This is the paradigm we use to keep these technologies safe, but it's not a pat solution, because the technology keeps getting more sophisticated. Yes, the dangers get more dangerous, but our tools for combatting them also become more powerful.

PARADIGMS ARE SHORT-LIVED. YOU HAVE TO CONSTANTLY REINVENT.

PLAYBOY: Then there's simple distraction. More than 25 percent of auto collisions involve cell phones, and people are going to rehab for internet addiction. Do we really need more technology?
KURZWEIL: It depends on the kind of technology you're talking about. The automobile is okay technology, but it's not great. Humans are indeed very bad drivers. In the course of this interview, dozens of people have died around the world from human drivers. There are 1.2 million deaths and millions of injuries each year caused by human drivers, which is why self-driving cars are on the way. It's just another example of how technology will make life safer and healthier.
PLAYBOY: But what about this trigger-finger impulse we all have to check our screens at every stoplight, at every pause in a conversation? That can't be healthy.
KURZWEIL: Humans have a proclivity to addiction, and that certainly extends to technology. Books by Sherry Turkle and others articulate that we would rather communicate on our devices than with each other. But generally speaking, there's another person at the other end of that device. Teenagers and even younger children growing up today are communicating with people around the world in ways that are very uplifting and educational.

Time triage is actually the most important decision we have. What are we going to spend our time on? As we learn more about the brain and expand our brains through merging them with technology, we're going to treat it as a network to improve our use of time in more creative and profound ways.
PLAYBOY: Do you ever turn your brain off, so to speak?
KURZWEIL: I like bicycling. I like to walk and hike and just let my mind be free and not try to guide it. I also do that while falling asleep, so I like to take naps. This novel I just wrote with my daughter is called *Danielle,* and it's about a precocious young girl. I would have fantasies about her as I drifted off to sleep. That was actually the source of the ideas in that book.
PLAYBOY: You literally write books in your sleep?
KURZWEIL: It's a mental technique in which I assign myself some challenge or question before dozing off. For me it could be a decision. Should I hire this person? Should I do this business deal? Or it could be a literary issue, like how am I going to express this idea in something I'm writing? It could be an interpersonal issue. It could be a math problem. I try not to solve it, but rather I let my mind free, and if I wake up in the middle of the night, as I invariably do once or twice, I often find myself dreaming in a strange, oblique way about this question.

Freud understood this. He said the censors in your mind are relaxed in your dreams, which is why you'll dream about things that are culturally and sexually taboo. Well, there are also professional taboos. We have very set ways of thinking about certain types of issues, particularly in science. When those rules are relaxed, I find some strange and wonderful ways of solving problems.

PLAYBOY: Have you used drugs to expand your thinking?

KURZWEIL: I smoked pot in college for a period, and it was a way of changing your consciousness. I've always been wary of LSD, because if you end up on a bad trip, you can't get off the ride. Alcohol is probably the oldest means we've had of changing our consciousness, escaping the anxiety of reality, and it can be useful for that. I enjoy gently relieving anxieties through a glass of wine. But I think our greatest opportunities to be creative, to communicate with others and to have relationships are fostered by technology. That's the best opportunity to transcend.

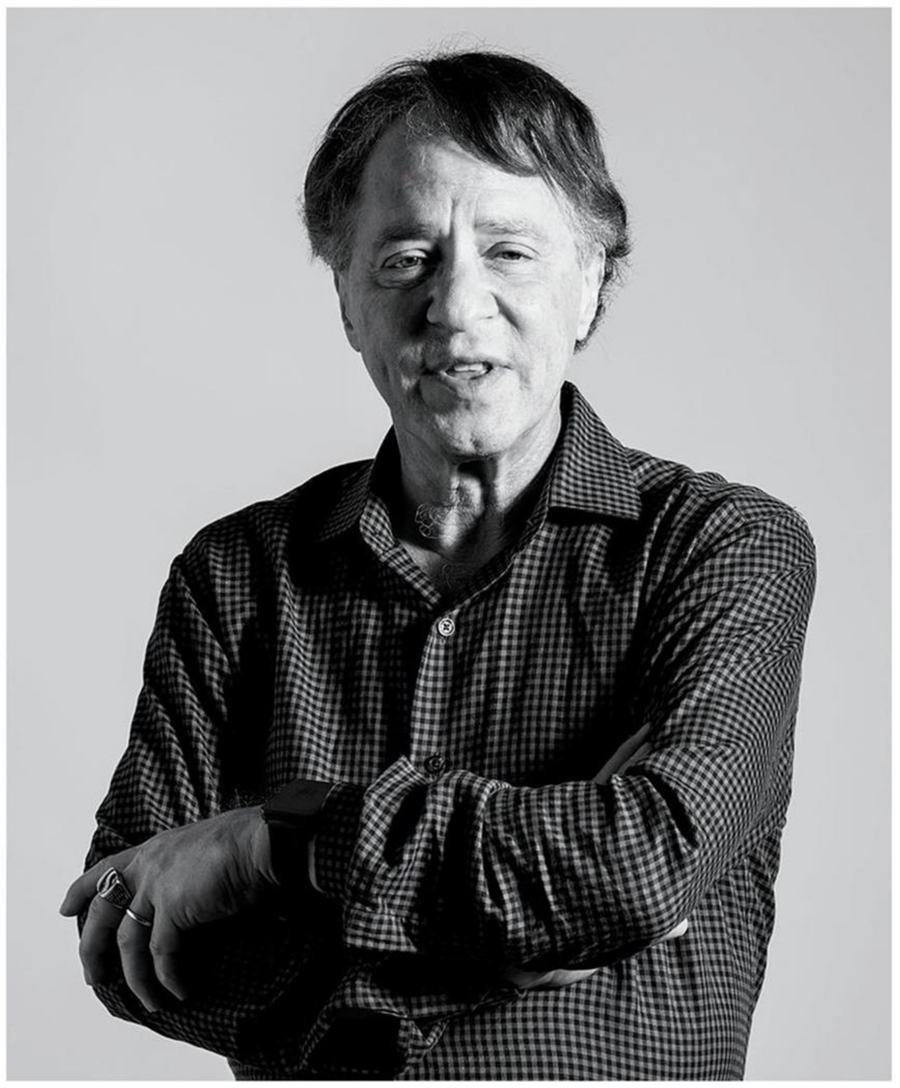
PLAYBOY: Would you say technology is your religion?

KURZWEIL: Religion originated in prescientific times, and it attempted to answer valid questions, such as why are we here and what is this incredible miracle of people coming into existence who didn't exist before? And then the inverse miracle of them disappearing, and where did they go, and what happens, and what is the nature of consciousness, and do we really have free will, and what are we supposed to be doing when we're here? Religion came up with valid insights.

I'd say the most important is the Golden Rule—to treat other people the way you would wish to be treated. Today we have more insight into the nature of reality from physics, biology and neuroscience, so we should update our answers to these questions based on our greater understanding of the world.

PLAYBOY: There are many things science isn't able to explain.

KURZWEIL: That's true. In particular, science does not provide a definitive answer to the issue of consciousness. There's actually no falsifiable experiment you could run that would definitively answer the question of whether or not an entity is conscious. You could ask the entity, and some character in a video game today could say, "Yes, I'm conscious, and I'm very angry at you," and we wouldn't believe it, because it doesn't have the subtle cues we associate with having those subjective states. But my contention is, as we get to the 2030s, artificial consciousness will be very realistic. That's what it means to pass the Turing test. And we will believe it, and they'll get angry at us if we don't believe them, and since they'll be very smart, we don't want



that to happen. But is that consciousness? John Searle, a philosopher at Berkeley, says consciousness is just another biological attribute, like digestion, lactation or respiration, but that's not the case. We can't really tap into the subjective experience of another entity. Are animals conscious? We don't know. That question is the root of the animal rights issue. I think my cat, before he died, was conscious. Not everybody agrees with that, but they probably hadn't met my cat.

PLAYBOY: Is it true you've elected to be frozen in the event of your untimely demise?

KURZWEIL: Yes, with the view toward being reanimated some decades from now. I think that will be feasible in the 2040s.

PLAYBOY: How do you feel about that prospect?

KURZWEIL: Poorly. I have enough trouble staying on top of my responsibilities when I'm alive and kicking, so the idea of being in suspended animation for decades is not appealing. That's plan D. Plan A is to make it through, and I'm doing well. So far so good. I wrote these books actually as a way of encouraging myself and *shaming* myself into taking good care of my health so I would be an exemplar of what I'm talking about. Plan B is also to make it through. Plan C is the same thing.

PLAYBOY: If you die before the Singularity arrives, does that mean you've failed?

KURZWEIL: Yes. I regard death as the greatest tragedy. People talk about getting used to death and accepting it, but the end of each life is a terrible loss, like the Library of Alexandria burning down. All that information, all their skills, their personality, their memories are gone. The people who loved that person also suffer. A significant portion of their neocortex had evolved to understand the person and interact with them, and then suddenly that person is no longer there for them to use that part of their brain, which leads to the shock of mourning. I call mourning the price of love.

But I think it's humanity's mission to transcend our limitations, and the most profound limitation we have is that of our life span. That's the hardest thing for people to accept, because birth and life and death have been with us since the beginning of recorded history. But I can see a path that's not far off where we can indefinitely extend our lives.

PLAYBOY: Will we know when we've reached this period you're talking about?

KURZWEIL: That's a good question. I mean, nothing is ever certain. I could be hit by the proverbial bus tomorrow. I do believe we will begin to overcome the causes of our short lives, and that's going to become a flood in the very near future. But you're right: We can never truly know eternity. As hard as I try, I can never come back to you and say, "Hey, I've done it. I've lived forever," because it's never forever. ■

H

A promising young writer, ***Farah Holt*** *is the woman we*

E

dream of meeting in a bookshop, clichés be damned

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY **KAVA GORNA**

Farah Holt sips a cup of Yorkshire English breakfast tea and follows it with a drag. This is her morning routine. “I am not a person who cares about looks or what people wear,” says the 24-year-old British blonde. “Being true as a real person is so much more interesting to me.” Farah’s disavowal of superficiality can be traced to her modest upbringing in Porthleven, Cornwall, a fishing village in southwest England with a population under 5,000. In her early teens, Farah moved to London to live with her aunt, a literature teacher, and began modeling soon after, though she never saw it as a long-term plan. “I’ve always wanted to write or be a teacher. After modeling, I’m going to get a degree in English literature. I love existential writing and Russian lit. I’ve read *The Age of Reason* by Jean-Paul Sartre three times and *Crime and Punishment* twice,” she says. “*The Unbearable Lightness of Being* by Milan Kundera is a favorite, and I love recommending Richard Brautigan’s *In Watermelon Sugar*.” Farah is also writing a novella, which will hopefully quell a common delusion. “Most people assume I’m some blonde bimbo,” she says, “but I’m not wrapped up in the fashion world. My goal is to have a big enough voice to influence others. That’s everyone’s struggle, after all: to find yourself in a place where nobody is judging you.”

TO DEAL WITH THE DEVIL

You will be sold to Islamic extremists within three hours of being kidnapped. Meet the people who race the clock to save you

The café at the Turkish border crossing to Syria is a ramshackle affair—a small concrete structure with a tarp roof and tables facing the parking lot. On a spring morning in 2014, Sean (not his real name), a tall, trim ex-military Irishman, arrived at eight A.M. and rolled cigarette after cigarette of loose Golden Virginia tobacco. The café's plastic chairs were a pain to sit on for hours and the flies were another story, but it was part of the job.

He was waiting for a crew of European journalists to come back into Turkey after nearly a week inside Syria. Sean knew northern Syria well. He had taken more than 40 trips throughout the region with media crews since Syria's peaceful protests descended into civil war in 2011, and he had a network of contacts that extended through the various militias fighting President Bashar al-Assad. These days he sent his crews in alone and ran their security from the border. It was more flexible that way, and the crews attracted less attention without him.

As usual, Sean reached out to his contacts before the crew went in, just a quick "Hey, *habibi,* how's it going?" on Skype to get an update on the ground. Syria was growing more dangerous, with fewer journalists going inside. Bombings, shifting militia loyalties, criminal gangs and kidnappings were on the rise. The security situation in Syria changed hourly, and Sean spent his days checking the news, reaching out to contacts, monitoring his journalists' whereabouts and running through the protocol of how to deal with all the things that could go wrong. There were many.

But today was the best day of the job—the day the journalists returned. He could picture the road they would be driving on out of Aleppo as it wound through olive farms and verdant hills, past the large city of Azaz toward the crossing into Turkey. Sean sat at the border so often the Turkish immigration guys had come to recognize his face among the motley mass of rotating foreigners. Usually the Turks would let Sean walk into no man's land to help the journalists carry their gear across the border. That was his favorite part—high fives and man-hugs all around, adrenaline pumping on a job well done, everyone back in the car and off to the hotel bar for a celebratory drink.

Then Sean's iPhone rang. It was the news desk with an update on the crew's location from the electronic tracker the journalists carried. Their car was almost at the border when suddenly it had turned around. "They're moving backward!" the news desk told Sean.

Fuck, Sean thought. He knew the journalists could have forgotten something and gone back for it. They could have had a car accident or been bombed from a plane and gone back for medical treatment. But he had a feeling that wasn't what had happened. Something in his gut told him it was much worse. The journalists had been kidnapped.

It was 10:30 A.M. Sean pulled on his flak jacket, grabbed his medical kit and ran toward the border. If he was right, he figured he had about three hours before the crew would be sold to ISIS.

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BY **SARAH A. TOPOL**

There is no "normal" kidnapping and ransom (K&R) case. Each one is a tangle of false leads, misaligned interests and lies. Each one is also potentially lethal. But it is a business, and just as there are career kidnappers—pirates, South American gangs, Niger Delta militants—there are career responders too.

A hostage-response operation comes in two parts: the crisis-management team (CMT), led by a negotiator, and an incident-response team (IRT), comprising the men on the ground. These are men like Sean: the knuckle-draggers, as they're sometimes called, who are contracted to handle the logistical legwork such as pickups and drop-offs.

It's a booming business. Global kidnapping of internationals is on the rise. In Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, Mali, Somalia, Kenya, Cameroon, Haiti, Yemen, Kashmir, everyone is a potential victim—journalists, aid workers, diplomats, missionaries, tourists, hikers, engineers.

No official statistics on global kidnappings exist, since most companies want to keep them as quiet as possible. Charles Regini, director of global response at Unity Resources Group, a security-consulting company, says the most tossed-around number for global kidnapping cases is about 25,000 a year. But those are likely only the reported cases. Many

are handled privately, and Regini suggests the real count could be 10 times as high.

In South America and the Niger Delta, kidnappings can usually be resolved with patience and a flexible playbook. But in the Middle East and North Africa, criminal gangs sell victims to the highest bidder. Hostages are moved up a ladder of interested parties until they're in the hands of Islamic extremists. Then the victims are in real danger. To rescue them, responders race to stop the kidnapping as early in the selling chain as possible.

But the rise of ISIS, in Syria and parts of Iraq, has been a kidnap responder's nightmare. At least 40 foreign journalists have been kidnapped in Syria since the start of the uprising in 2011. Media blackouts and the chaos of civil war make it impossible to know how many Syrian nationals and foreign aid workers have been abducted. What is known is that ISIS released at least 14 Europeans for ransom in the spring of 2014. Then, over the summer, the group beheaded two American journalists, James Foley and Steven Sotloff. British aid workers David Cawthorne Haines and Alan Henning were next. In mid-November, ISIS killed American aid worker Peter Kassig, a 26-year-old former Army Ranger who had converted to Islam in captivity and taken the name Abdul-Rahman. Kayla Mueller, a 26-year-old aid worker, was ISIS's last known American hostage. Mueller was killed in February 2015. ISIS claimed she died in a Jordanian air strike, but the Pentagon said there was "no doubt" ISIS killed her. The group is still holding British photojournalist John Cantlie.

Unlike the U.K. and the U.S., European governments actually pay ransom for their citizens, though they officially deny this. An investigation by *The New York Times* found that Al Qaeda and its direct affiliates earned at least $125 million in revenue from kidnappings since 2008, almost all of it from Europe. There is debate as to whether that means European nationals get kidnapped more often, but it certainly means they have a better chance of getting out alive. The 14 Europeans held with Foley and Sotloff were released for between $2.2 million and $5.5 million each.

That also means ISIS's coffers were overflowing. In the fall of 2014, the organization was earning more than $1 million a day from oil sales. After ISIS took Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city, and all the money in its banks, it no longer needed ransoms to fund operations.

That growing wealth has jammed a wrench into the gears of those working to free American hostages: How do you negotiate with kidnappers who don't need money? And what if beheading a captive in an online propaganda video is worth more than money anyway?

"What's happening in Syria is something nobody has had to manage before," says John Schafer, a K&R negotiator since 1994. "It's totally different. Every negotiator, everyone who manages crisis response is rethinking their entire existence after these latest ISIS deals."

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The first thing that happens after you're kidnapped? Nothing.

Terrorist groups rely on a period of silence to establish fear and confusion, and to research the victim. On the other side, responders need to figure out who the kidnappers are, ideally before their initial call even comes in. First, responders build a case history: who has previously been taken in the area, how they were taken, how long they were held, by whom, how the victims got out and how much was paid. Intelligence gathering is key. Frequently during the period of silence, an incident-response team is deployed to track down leads.

THE GUY WAS SOBBING. "HE'S GOING TO KILL US!" THE PISTOL WAS AIMED AT SEAN'S HEAD.

Next comes an evaluation of the victim's entire digital footprint, personal and professional. What can be sanitized quickly to remove personal, religious, financial and political commentary from social media? The responder knows the kidnappers are doing their own digital recon to assess the hostage's worth. They're online, checking home zip codes for property values or reading an employer's annual report to determine how much ransom they can demand.

Once the kidnappers make contact, the CMT distributes a telephone number that will be used for communication with the hostage takers. It's crucial to have only one line of negotiation, manned by an appointed "communicator" whom the responder chooses and trains. He's looking for someone who is calm and has clear pronunciation, someone who will be able to handle the threats the hostage takers will inevitably throw into the mix. The communicator is a person affiliated with the victim—a relative or an employee of the victim's company. In some cases, it needs to be someone who speaks the local language.

Next comes the part every responder dreads: letting the family know it is going to be bad. There will be silence, there will be threats, and there is no guarantee the victim will get out, especially in the Middle East and North Africa. "You always have an agreement. You always see in their eyes 'I hear you, thank you, you're right, we're ready for that.' But it never happens that way," says Regini. "There's still a sense of urgency and a sense of immediacy and strong emotions about what we have to do tomorrow or the next day. You have to constantly remind them, 'This is a long process; it will take time. We have strategy recommendations for you. They're not going to work. We'll have to try other things.' Preparing a family for that, supporting them through that time is very, very hard."

Each negotiator's playbook for communication is unique and constantly evolving, but there are certain universals. Once communication is established, you need to set up a code word to know you're dealing with the right people. Always start by asking how the victims are doing; make sure you remind the person on the other side that these victims are human. Everything the communicator does is scripted, drilled, practiced and rescripted. When the call comes, everything is recorded and noted. Every threat is written down.

"It becomes an exercise in handling objections the other side puts on each other," explains Schafer. "How do you respond when someone says they're going to kill the hostage? The response would be 'We understand you have the power to kill them, but in order to continue the conversation, it's important for you to keep them as safe as you possibly can. Do you have any needs we might be able to help you with that?' We try to change the conversation from a threat to what their medical needs are, increasing their humanity."

Schafer says the most frequent donation is money for communication. Kidnappers frequently use burner phones and throw away SIM cards for fear of being traced. This means

cash left in envelopes on street corners or bridges. Small amounts of money, maybe $200 in local currency, stuffed inside a USAID bag of flour and left sitting on a bridge. There are other subtle rules to the game. You never give them exactly what they ask for.

"If they say a red bag, you do a bag that has blue and then red on it, because once you give 100 percent compliance, they have you," Schafer says. "You never know until the end, until you get your people back, what's going to happen."

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Sean had planned for this; it was part of the job. He called the CMT at the headquarters of the media company where the journalists worked: "I'm going in. Don't call me until I call you." The clock was ticking, and every minute mattered. He called his wife. "There's been a situation. I think they've been abducted. I'm going in to get them out. Don't worry," he told her. She told him she wasn't worried; she was "fucking concerned."

As Sean jogged the mile through the crossing into Syria, he thought through his next moves. He needed permission and a guarantee of safe passage from the Islamic Front, a rebel coalition that controlled the crossing and surrounding areas. Next, he needed a car and an escort and then he needed to get fucking moving. After that he'd be winging it.

Crossing into Syria, he legged it to the Islamic Front's media center to the west of the border gate. Inside the squat building, Sean found Yusuf, one of the group's activists. "I need your help," he explained. Yusuf and one of his fighter friends volunteered to drive Sean into the town of Tal Rifaat.

It was a 40-minute drive, and Sean used the time to assess the situation. If the journalists were injured, either during a car accident or some type of explosion, he needed to get to the hospital. If it was an abduction, he needed to get to their last known location and retrace their steps. The first minutes of a kidnapping are violent as hell. Hostage takers want to put the fear of God into victims, which means injuries, most likely head trauma. But if there had been a car accident, that could mean chest trauma; if it was an explosion, catastrophic bleeding. Sean played through the scenarios in his head: problem, solution, problem, solution. Click—click—click.

The car sped into town, but Sean felt the men he was with had no idea where they were going. They were circling, losing time. "Just fucking stop someone and ask!" Sean demanded. He knew that compromised them—he was an unarmed white guy in a soft-skin vehicle—but he had no choice. They had stopped at an intersection to flag down pedestrians when two men pulled up in a 4x4.

An investigation found that Al Qaeda and its affiliates made at least $125 million in revenue from kidnappings, but with its coffers overflowing the organization no longer needs ransoms to fund its operations.

"I know you," the well-dressed passenger said to Sean. He spoke flawless English, but Sean didn't recognize him. "Local Islamic Front commander," Sean remembers Yusuf prompting him. Sean got out of the car. He was now completely compromising himself. "*Habibi!* How are you?" Sean asked. He was going for broke. "We have a situation. I think my friends have been kidnapped. I need your help."

The Islamic Front prided itself on helping journalists cover Syria safely while ISIS steadily unfurled its tentacles in cities across northern Syria.

Sean decided to follow his gut. He asked the commander to take him to the crew's last known location based on the tracker data. They drove to a house on the outskirts of town. As they were getting out of the car, the front door of the house flew open and a young translator who had been traveling with the journalists ran straight at them. The kid was covered in blood.

"They were kidnapped!" he shouted. "They tried to escape, but they caught them. They are going to come here and kill us!" The kid babbled about a well-known gang leader. "He took them! He's going to come kill us!"

The translator ran back inside the house, and a young guy came out. "You have to leave!" he shouted at Sean. "You have to leave! Now!"

"Just calm down," Sean told him.

"You have to leave now! They are going to kill us!" Then the guy pulled a gun and pointed it at Sean's head.

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There is no application to fill out to become a K&R responder. Most are ex-military, ex–Special Forces or ex–FBI negotiators.

Sean came out of the British army infantry and worked in the prison system, where he trained as a hostage negotiator. After running into a friend who worked as a bodyguard for the rich and famous, Sean shifted into "close protection" and spent three years in London and the south of France, looking after multibillionaires. "I was living the life of a Walter Mitty billionaire myself," he says. "Driving fast cars, being on the best yachts in

the world, flying on the Concorde, you name it." His client was a friend of George H.W. Bush. One day, while shooting the shit with Bush's Secret Service men, Sean admitted that the job had begun to bore him. Most people he looked after didn't even need a bodyguard; they just liked the idea of having one. The agent suggested Sean join the United Nations. He applied and was assigned to East Timor. When the UN called and told him, Sean and his wife spent three hours trying to find the place in an atlas.

He moved through Bosnia and Georgia, where he worked in close protection, even watching over former UN secretary-general Kofi Annan a few times. Then a friend called: The U.S. was invading Iraq. Did he want to come to Baghdad? Yes. In Baghdad he ran security for engineers and, later, for journalists. He's handled kidnapping cases in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Venezuela and Colombia.

Sean is messianic about keeping a low profile. He's fit but doesn't pump weights so as not to get bulky and stand out in a crowd. He dresses in local clothes and travels in soft-skin vehicles. His regiment tattoo has been covered with another symbol to make sure the bad guys never know the extent of his military service.

For a while Sean's wife didn't know much about what he did. They didn't discuss it. Sean would come from hell on earth to the house in the British countryside they'd redone themselves and switch off. He had a standard operating procedure: up at 5:30 A.M., morning cup of coffee, walk the dogs. He kept a wall between his life and the job.

One night over wine, his wife called him on it. She told him she needed to know more about what he did. So he started opening up, sending her links to news stories from his journalists. She was horrified. "That's one thing my wife hates," he says. "She hates that you'll put your life on the line to help those guys. But that's part of the parcel."

That problem has only gotten more acute with Syria. "In Syria with ISIS it's a totally different ball game. They don't want to negotiate. What have ISIS got to negotiate for? Fuck all. They've got $42 billion in the bank," he explains.

A Red Cross staffer assists freed hostages in Afghanistan. Experts say there are roughly 25,000 global kidnappings every year, but some suggest the real number could be 10 times that many.

Sean discusses the possibility of kidnapping with every team he works with. "Except for the Europeans, if you get taken or you get sold to ISIS, then that's it. You're done," he explains. Some strategies can reduce the risk: Wear local clothes, and don't wear wraparound sunglasses or chew gum—things Westerners do that Arabs don't. Never stay in a location longer than an hour, though 45 minutes is better. This lessens the risk of opportunistic kidnappings. (If opportunists spot a Westerner, they need to prepare to grab them. This includes arming up, organizing vehicles and figuring out a safe house. Security consultants assume that takes about an hour.) To prevent a premeditated kidnapping, potential victims should vary their routines and tell as few people as possible where they're going and when.

You can try to mitigate the risk, but no one can make it disappear entirely. So Sean talks to crews about what to do in the event of a kidnapping. "I can't tell anyone that they must try to escape," he says. "I give them options. You comply or you fight. Those are your two options. If you comply, you comply all the time. If you fight, you do it right away, because that's when everyone's adrenaline is up."

If you try to escape, the whole team has to do it together. No man left behind. If you leave someone behind, that is their death sentence. Personally, Sean says, he would always try to escape. He would rather take a bullet in the back of the head trying to get his people out than have his beheading end up on YouTube.

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The young guy was sobbing. "He's going to kill us. Leave!" The pistol was aimed at Sean's head.

Sean readied himself to do a pistol grab when the commander stepped in between them. "He's with me," the commander said. The guy lowered his gun but continued to beg Sean to leave. If the gang leader heard Sean was in town, he would kill them all.

Knowing the journalists had been kidnapped and had attempted to escape didn't solve any of Sean's problems. He didn't know where the journalists were or what condition they were in. What he did know was getting caught after an escape attempt was bad. Not only would the journalists be punished for running, the hostage takers might decide to sell them sooner. They could have already moved or killed them.

"You need to leave now, because there could be bigger problems," the commander told Sean. He protested, but the commander wasn't hearing it. The young guy was still sobbing. Sean was fucked. He didn't want to

leave, but he needed to show the commander that he trusted him. It would be the commander's men who would have to find the journalists regardless of whether Sean tagged along. Finally, Sean agreed to go.

Sean did the calculations. He was 80 percent confident that if the journalists were alive and still in the town, the Islamic Front militia would get them back. After an attempted escape, the journalists would have been beaten, badly. They would need immediate treatment for head injuries, gunshot wounds or brain trauma. That would mean getting them to the nearest Turkish hospital, six miles from the border.

Would the usual ambulances be at the crossing? If not, Sean would treat them and then get a taxi or drive them himself. Then, medical evacuation, first to Istanbul, then Europe. Next problem: passports. Had they been robbed? Probably. They would need copies of their passports from the CMT. Then get the CMT to straighten things out with the embassies. Click—click—click.

Sean called the CMT to report the kidnapping: "If they're alive, the Islamic Front will get them out. Start planning a medical evacuation and passports." He hung up and rolled a cigarette.

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Walkie-talkies crackled inside the Islamic Front's military police headquarters. The commander was radioing his on-duty fighters: "Everyone get ready. Go down to the trucks."

The Islamic Front military police go on countless raids. Everyone was calm, going through the routine procedure. Abu Ahmed (not his real name) grabbed his AK and ammunition and filed out of the former elementary school to the yard. About 15 men were on duty that morning, and they gathered in front of two military-police vehicles as they waited for their commander to join them. Abu Ahmed lit a cigarette.

The commander arrived 10 minutes later. He was in his 40s, a respected leader, not too serious, not too funny, a good commander who treated his men well. He told them they were going to the media center. Abu Ahmed and four other men crammed inside the cab of a camouflaged Toyota truck while two more stood in the truck bed with a Doshka, a Russian-made heavy machine gun. The commander and the rest of the team climbed into a Hyundai van, and the convoy set out.

When they pulled up at the media center, Abu Ahmed noticed the director's face was ashen. "Journalists have been kidnapped," he heard him tell the commander. Word spread that the operation involved liberating kidnapped foreign journalists; the men were psyched for something heavy. But by the time they climbed back into their cars, a switch had flipped. Foreigners were worth a lot of money. This wouldn't be easy. Abu Ahmed thought there would be a clash. The driver was speeding, and someone started to sing to take the edge off. The revolutionary song "Yalla Erhal Ya Bashar" filled the truck's cab.

"The Syrians won't be humiliated! Get out Bashar!" the men chanted together. "We will remove Bashar with our strength! Syria wants freedom!"

"WHAT HAVE ISIS GOT TO NEGOTIATE FOR? THEY'VE GOT $42 BILLION IN THE BANK."

The truck bumped along the potholes on a road to the outskirts of the town. The convoy pulled up to the gang leader's villa, a large house with a wide spread of land, like a mansion dropped on a farm. Four fighters jumped out of the van and took up positions around the house. The rest went straight to the front door.

Abu Ahmed stood behind the commander as he knocked.

A young man opened the door. "What?" he asked nonchalantly.

"You have kidnapped journalists, and we need these journalists," the commander told him.

"That's not true," the kid said.

"We have orders to search this house."

"We haven't kidnapped anyone," the kid said. He looked nervous. "I can't let you check the house until the owner arrives."

The commander didn't need to issue an order. Two men pulled the kid from the door frame and handcuffed him. The rest followed the commander in formation, weapons drawn, into the house.

It happened fast. Two unarmed men in the front, realizing they were outnumbered, raised their hands. Military police handcuffed them as Abu Ahmed and five others moved to the nearest hallway to begin clearing rooms. They saw two armed men guarding a closed door.

"Don't shoot!" the men shouted as they lowered their AKs to the floor and raised their arms. "We don't have anything to do with this!"

The men kept their arms up as Abu Ahmed approached. He stood guard, gun cocked, as his colleague took off his scarf and pulled it over one of the guards' eyes as a blindfold and cuffed him. Abu Ahmed pulled a pistol from the man's belt. "We don't have anything to do with this," the man repeated. "We were just following orders!"

They led the men outside and put them in the van. Abu Ahmed was surprised it had been so easy. A few minutes later, the commander came out with the journalists. They had secured the hostages in less than 30 minutes, but the clock was still ticking. They needed to move the journalists to a hospital—one of them had been shot.

• • •

Minutes later, Yusuf's phone rang at the border. The Islamic Front had located the journalists. They had asserted control, peacefully, and would bring them to the border after medical treatment. Sean called the CMT: "Look, we can't be sure until I get eyes on them. I have to confirm that they're alive and well."

At 3:30 P.M. Sean ran out to meet them. The journalists were badly shaken, violently beaten, and one of them had several gunshot wounds, but they were alive. As long as they didn't have significant brain trauma, the rest was logistics. The journalists were hopped up on adrenaline, jittery and anxious to get out of Syria. Sean checked their vitals. Outside the café where seven hours earlier Sean had daydreamed about high fives and celebratory drinks, they got into an ambulance for the drive to the Turkish hospital.

The CMT had organized passport copies, a private jet evacuation to Istanbul, new passports in the capital and travel back to Europe. A member of the CMT would meet the journalists at the Istanbul hospital. Sean handed off the crew, sorted out the final paperwork in southern Turkey and paid the hotel bill and the drivers.

The next morning, he got on a plane home. He kissed his wife, had a glass of wine and slept. It was over. He got his men out. At 5:30 A.M. he made a cup of coffee and walked his Labradors. In the afternoon, he sat down to write the incident report. ■

PLAYMATE

PHOTOGRAPHY BY AARON FEAVER

Brook Power: The name is a perfect fit for our Miss May, a free spirit who follows her instincts. The artist, who is regularly hired by record companies, fashion labels and magazines, strives to live up to her superhero-ready surname—almost to a fault, she says. "My golden rule is to put others first, but I have a Native American stubborn streak," says Brook, who is part Chippewa. She knows that fortitude has defined female icons for centuries. "Sacagawea, my role model, broke through the strict gender restrictions of North American culture. Before her, Native American women weren't viewed as equals. As a female artist, it's more difficult for me to achieve credibility, but I'm not bitter. I'll take the added challenge, because gender equality has never been forced. Women don't need the booster seat of affirmative action to be as successful as men. We can kick ass just fine on our own without a social movement taking credit for our successes."

WHITE OWL

MISS MAY 2016

BROOK POWER

AGE: 27 **BIRTHPLACE:** Inglewood, California **CURRENT CITY:** Los Angeles, California

MY HAWAIIAN ROOTS

My dad was an artist and a surfer; he moved us to Hawaii when I was about five years old, after the 1992 earthquake in Los Angeles. I was raised on Oahu, on the edge of the jungle and the ocean. I was a lucky little lady to grow up in a place like that.

THE FIRST THING YOU'LL NOTICE ABOUT ME

The first thing I always notice about people is their shoes. If that's the case for everyone, the first thing someone will notice about me is that I like to frequent muddy places.

MY PERFECT DAY OFF

When I'm not traveling, I'll take my horse about an hour north of L.A. to a national park that has miles of mountain trails. My siblings and I try to trek around there as much as possible with our animals. Otherwise, you can find me catching waves in Malibu.

LISTEN TO THIS

My dad used to play "Alice's Restaurant" by Arlo Guthrie on long car rides. It's a silly song on first listen, but it's actually about the sadness of the draft during the Vietnam War. I'll put that record on from time to time when I work on my art at home.

POLITICAL LEANINGS

I'm a capitalist, which used to describe motivated dreamers before it became a word for money-hungry people. I believe in giving power to the people, prioritizing education and keeping this country as free as we can. It's a beautiful thing to have so many different cultures assimilate, coexist and love each other, but every year there seems to be more and more government restrictions telling us what we can and can't do. We need to live freely and lovingly.

THE KEY TO HAPPINESS

The ocean is my connection to God and makes me feel good, without fail. I also believe humans have the capacity to make our own happiness internally. As Abraham Lincoln supposedly said, "Most folks are about as happy as they make up their minds to be."

@BrookPower @BrookPower

SEX
Jay Hamell

INTERNATIONAL DATE LINES

A globe-trotting guide to hooking up, hanging out and sexting around the world, with the must-have dating apps, must-know pickup lines and expert tips that will break any language barrier

BY **ERIC KLINENBERG** ILLUSTRATIONS BY **JIMMY TURRELL**

The swipe right on Tinder. The double tap on Instagram. The Facebook like. Flirting in America is a well-oiled, wi-fi-connected machine fueled by a handful of apps instead of old-school barside meet-and-greets. But if you think your—let's be real—lazy emoji use will impress singles overseas, it's time to up your game. Tech makes it easier than ever to meet strangers around the world, and a little knowledge of cultural traditions will help you hook up on a global scale. So grab your passport as we give you a primer on foreign relations.

ARGENTINA

Getting on the Scene

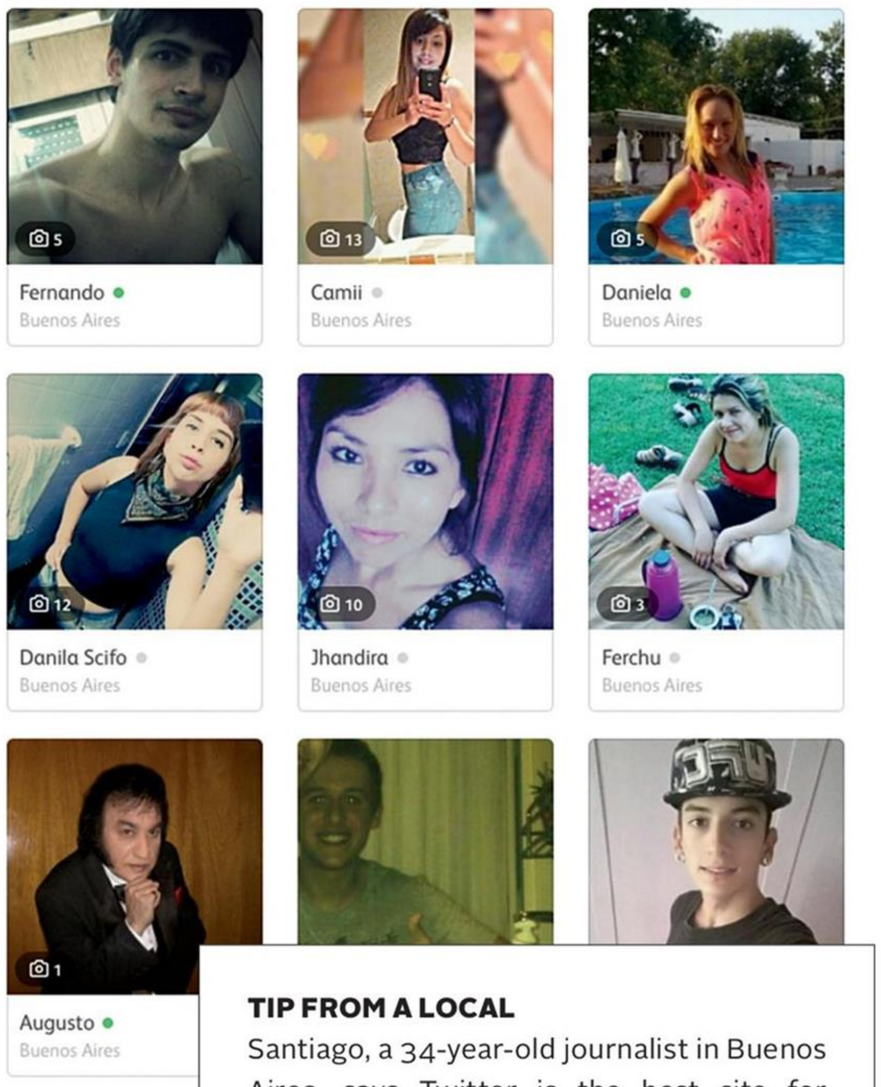
Believe it or not, Argentina, the first country in Latin America to legalize gay marriage, in 2010, still stigmatizes online dating. That's because Argentineans respect tradition, including that of organizing romance through family, school and church (70 to 90 percent of the population identifies as Catholic). "Although people here are meeting online, they aren't admitting it," says Valeria Schapira, a Match.com consultant and author of *Tangled: Sex, Humor and Love on the Web*. But hope is in sight for the digitally devoted: Match.com is gaining thousands of new users in the region every month, and Argentina is quickly becoming one of the largest online-dating markets in Latin America, along with Brazil and Mexico. "There is still some fear, especially among women, that online dating will make him or her look desperate," says Schapira. "But it's better than it was a decade ago, when I'd tell people I was dating online and they'd look at me like I'd gone mad."

Download This

Aside from Match, a leading network in Argentina is nine-year-old Badoo. It works well because it's nominally a social-networking service that subtly functions as a dating site. Searching for matches on Badoo mirrors the same process on your standard dating app: Sign in, select an age range and check out nearby singles. Users choose whether they're there to flirt, share photos or meet in real life; they can also see a list of everyone who checks out their profile. (Consummate OkCupid users know all about this mind-fucking feature.) Badoo makes online seduction easy and surprisingly effective. It's a wonder the site hasn't caught on in the U.S.

How to Play the Field

Unlike in the States, where a continual slate of rom-coms have conditioned guys to chase the girl, Argentinean men have an advantage when it comes to meeting beautiful women. In urban areas, single men who date online often find a large number of women looking for someone their age—and the women are far more aggressive online than they are in person. "Today the number of Latin American women who take the initiative and message a man first online is bigger than the number of men who do," says Schapira. "That would never happen in real life." Here's to online empowerment.



TIP FROM A LOCAL

Santiago, a 34-year-old journalist in Buenos Aires, says Twitter is the best site for meeting women. That makes sense, given the country's polarizing take on digital matchmaking. Santiago says his friends scope out the profile pictures of women who follow them. If they're attractive, the men will automatically follow them back. "You have a lot of people hitting on each other on Twitter," he explains. "Once you start following each other, there are all these opportunities. You can direct-message, send a phone number, whatever. I invite people who follow me to come to barbecues at my apartment. If they accept, you're in."

"YOU HAVE A LOT OF PEOPLE HITTING ON EACH OTHER ON TWITTER."

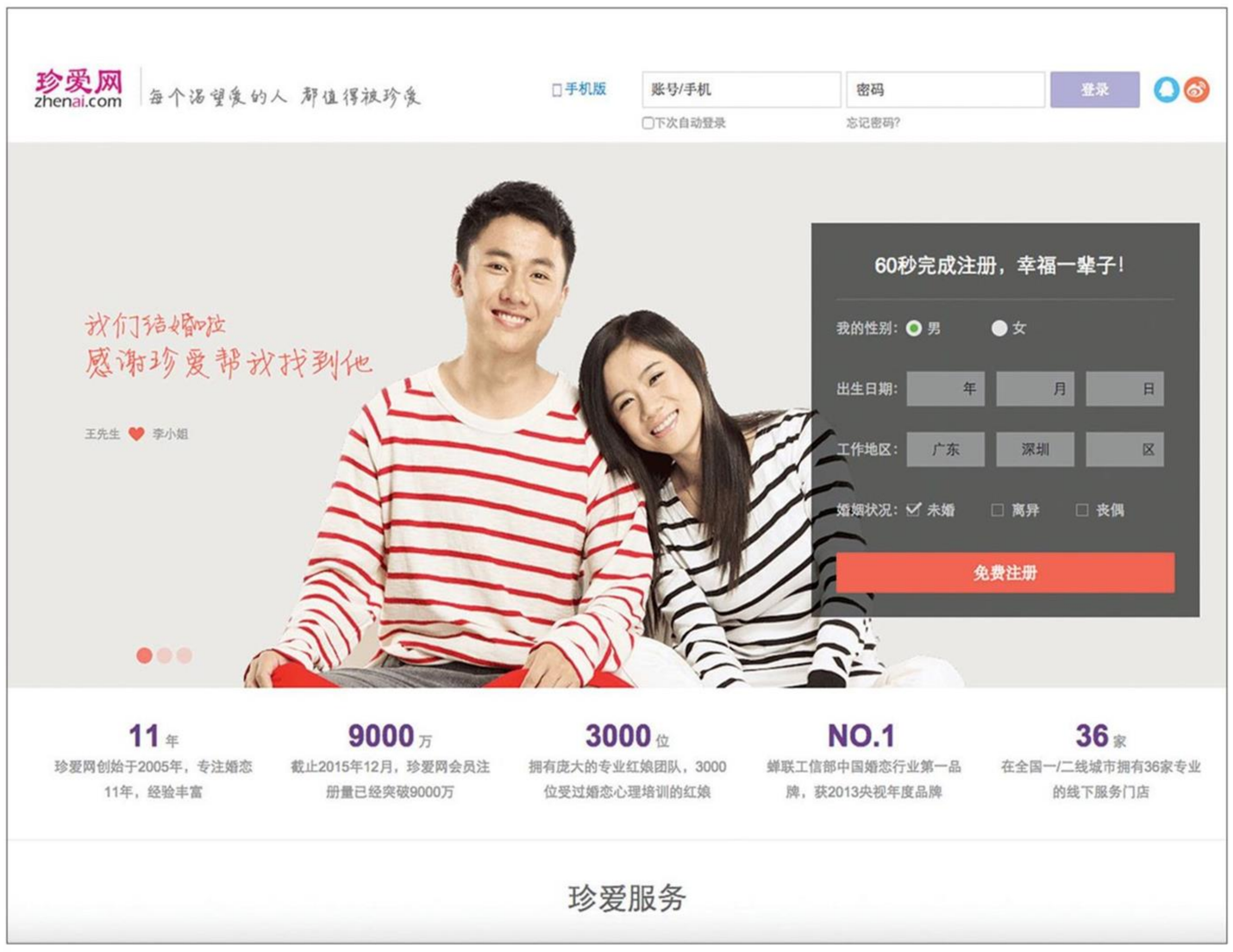
CHINA

Getting on the Scene

In China, the tradition of matchmaking based on family status goes back more than 2,000 years. Now dating apps lend a hand to those old-school rituals, especially as thousands of people migrate from rural to urban areas, breaking ties with their old social networks along the way. With a billion-plus population, it's no shock China is home to the world's largest dating market, but what is surprising is that the market operates like a high-end industry. Here, some online dating companies house massive call centers where female, often older, employees fix up singles just as they might have a century ago. Which leads us to....

Download This

Zhenai (*zhen* means cherished, *ai* means love) has more than 90 million users and is growing by 40,000 every day. By all accounts, it's one of the leading online dating businesses in a country that has banned Facebook and Tinder. Zhenai offers three different services:



"IN OUR CULTURE, PEOPLE WON'T TELL YOU WHY YOU'RE REJECTED. A MATCHMAKER WILL."

The first, which is free, lets people post profiles and send digital "winks" but withholds messaging capabilities. It's basically foreplay, and the goal is to tease people with enough potential matches that they'll shell out around $60 for a yearly membership. The paid service works like most American dating sites and is accessible on most devices, including Apple Watches. Zhenai's third service is the most unconventional by U.S. standards—and the most expensive. It's called the "online to offline matchmaking service," and it will set you back roughly $2,500 for an eight-month term. What does that dough buy? An in-person (or phone, depending on where you live) consultation with one of Zhenai's 3,000 matchmakers. Clients meet their coach to craft a description of themselves and the kind of person they're looking for. First dates take place in the company's meeting rooms with the matchmaker present, in an effort to eliminate that all-too-familiar first-date awkwardness. "Some Chinese women want a husband to own an apartment, because real estate prices are so high," says Song Li, Zhenai's CEO. "This is awkward to ask someone, but the matchmaker can find out for you ahead of time." Plus, you'll get feedback on your game. "A lot of times when people meet someone, they can't tell if their date is interested, so you can find out from the matchmaker," says Li. "In our culture, people won't tell you the truth about why you're rejected. A matchmaker will." It all sounds incredibly intense—and says a lot about how seriously Chinese singles play the dating game.

TIP FROM A LOCAL

Ditch the humble brag in profiles. Li advises men to show off their educational credentials, income, ambitions and career potential. "I actually did a study of the relationship between a user's monthly salary and the number of winks they receive on our site. For men, the line is a straight slope up. You can literally calculate how many more winks you'll receive for every 1,000 yuan." For women, Li says, "that same line is flat, until you reach a certain level of income, at which point men's interest goes down."

RUSSIA

Getting on the Scene

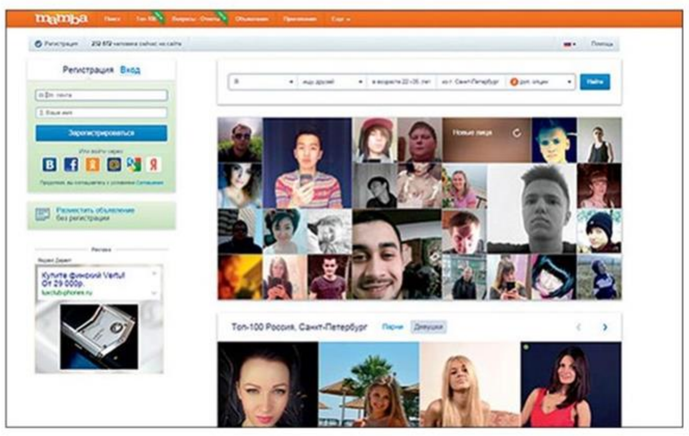
Hooking up isn't easy in Russia, where you're more likely to have a one-night stand with a *matryoshka* doll than the person you had vodka shots with at a bar. "There is less of a hookup culture here than you see in the U.S.," says Melissa McDonald, who has analyzed the Russian dating scene for Yandex, the country's equivalent of Google. According to her research, 81 percent of Russians who use dating sites are looking for "love and serious relationships," and 17 percent are looking for "friendship." Only two percent fall in the "other" category, which includes casual sex. But with 83 million internet users in Russia in 2013 alone, the country remains Europe's largest online market. For comparison, Europe's second-largest market, Germany, had about 60 million users.

Download This

Scores of local services vie for a piece of the action, but Fotostrana, Mamba and Topface are a few of the go-tos, and they're similar to American sites. On Mamba, you sign in through e-mail, Facebook or Twitter. (For good measure, provide a mobile number so the site can confirm your "REAL-status," which lets prospects know you're legit.) Mamba's user-friendly interface asks the across-the-board basics: your gender, what you're looking for, your physical features, desired age range and location. Mamba categories not commonly seen in the States? Try "bad habits" and "accommodation," the options for which range from "lives with parents" to "no permanent accommodation."

How to Play the Field

Russians don't mess around when it comes to profile pictures. If you've got it, flaunt it—money, muscles, whatever. "For both genders, sexy photos are the best," says Dmitry Filatov, CEO of Russia's fastest-growing dating site, Topface. Indeed, foreigners and journalists who visit Russian sites seem to find the people incredibly hot: "Rest assured, when you sign up for one of these dating sites, you will see a number of stunningly attractive women," reports one dating blog. "But a photo that shows how rich you are is also good," adds Filatov. Men in particular use their profile pictures to display their wealth—and their abs. On the other end of the spectrum are troves of pictures that are seriously WTF. BuzzFeed recently ran the listicle "29 Completely Unexplainable Russian Dating Site Pictures." All of them lived up to that description.



TIP FROM A LOCAL

Once Russians start flirting, they follow strong traditional gender roles. Prior to a first date, men might send digital flowers or other virtual gifts via the dating site—and the number of bouquets a woman has received is clearly advertised in her profile. So, you know, no pressure. Also, though Tinder has become a major player in Russian social life over the past few years, beware. Russians use it not only for dating but for social networking and business as well. So don't get too excited when an attractive person in St. Petersburg swipes right on your profile: He or she may be interested only in your résumé—or your pocketbook.

"THERE IS LESS OF A HOOKUP CULTURE IN RUSSIA THAN YOU SEE IN THE UNITED STATES."

BRAZIL

Getting on the Scene

Extroverted isn't a strong enough word to describe how Brazilians present themselves on dating sites. *Exhibitionistic* might be a more appropriate term—and that's part of the problem for online dating companies. Locals are not in the least bit culturally conservative. Life in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo is remarkably social, playful, open and spontaneous, which means it's actually easier to meet people on the street, at the beach or in a bar than it is to hook up online. The good news for dudes: Single women in Brazil outnumber men by more than 4 million. The bad news for dudes: That huge disproportion is the result of higher mortality rates among young men. The imbalance is particularly apparent in Rio, host city for this year's Summer Olympics, which is home to nine men for every 10 women.

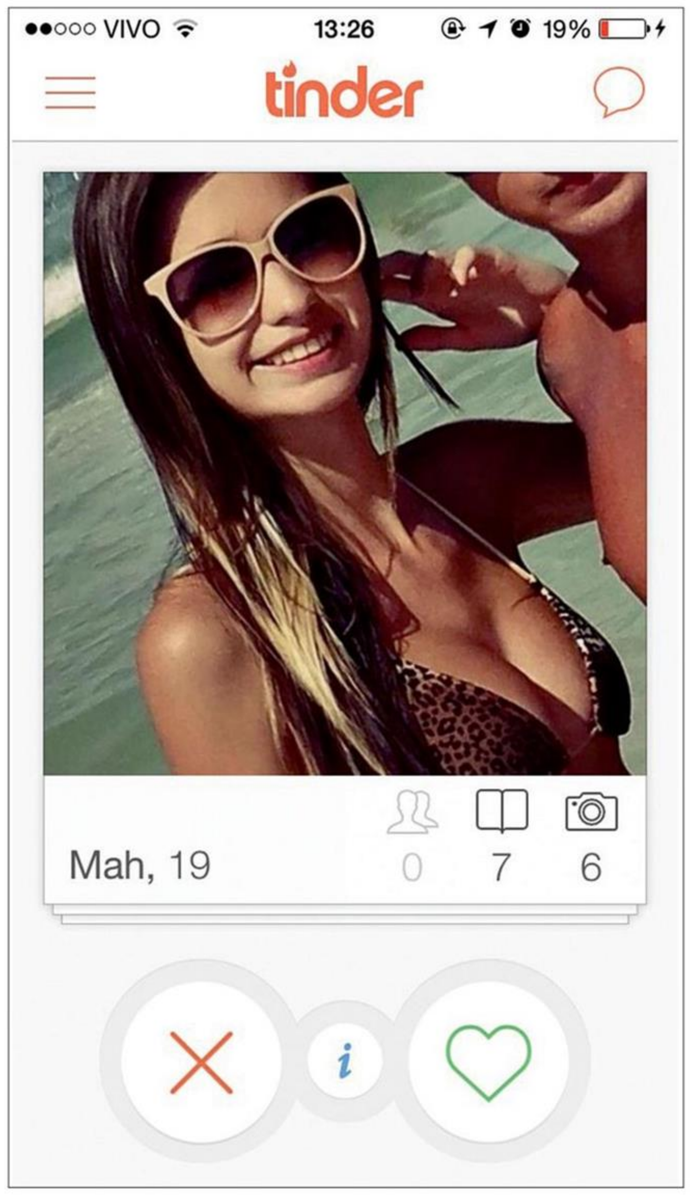
"WE HAVE MILES OF BEACHES. BE READY TO REVEAL SOME FLESH."

Download This

If you're adamant about finding a date online instead of on the shoreline, one of Brazil's leading dating sites is the LGBT-friendly ParPerfeito ("perfect match" in Portuguese). As the name implies, users are likely on the hunt for spouses or serious partners. If you're more interested in a fling and don't have time to brush up your Portuguese before landing in São Paulo, your usual wingman, Tinder, will do. During the 2014 World Cup, soccer fans from around the world, including tens of thousands of young Americans and Europeans, came to Brazil and brought their Tinder accounts with them. The app exploded as foreigners recommended it to strangers on the streets. "Everyone was using it," says Gael Deheneffe, general manager at ParPerfeito and Match LatAm, the Latin American outpost of Match.com. Fun fact: The World Cup helped precipitate Tinder's Passport feature, which allows users to change their location before vacation, in case they want to rack up matches to meet upon touchdown.

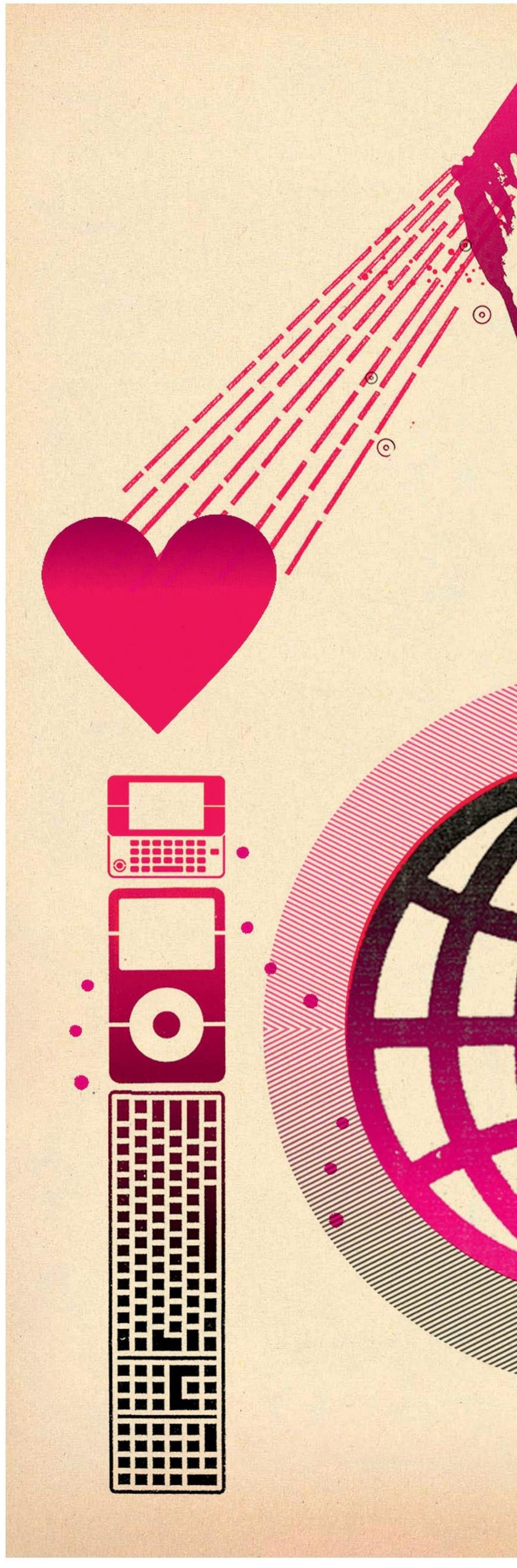
How to Play the Field

Count on your date to show up with a gang of friends or family members. Dating in Brazil is a group activity, so don't expect an intimate conversation, let alone something sexual, until you've been vetted by the pack.



TIP FROM A LOCAL

Before he moved to Rio, Deheneffe, who is French, worked at a popular European dating site. "When I compare Brazilian faces on profiles with what I saw in France, it's amazing. The French think looking stern and serious is sexy. Here, it's about the joy you can express with your body," he says. "That's natural, since Brazil has miles and miles of beaches. Something like 90 percent of profile pictures are of people in little bathing suits, wearing sunglasses. If you're coming down here to meet someone online, be ready to reveal some flesh." But you'll also need a killer smile. "The smile is huge in Latin America," Deheneffe says. "It's a beautiful, touching part of the culture."



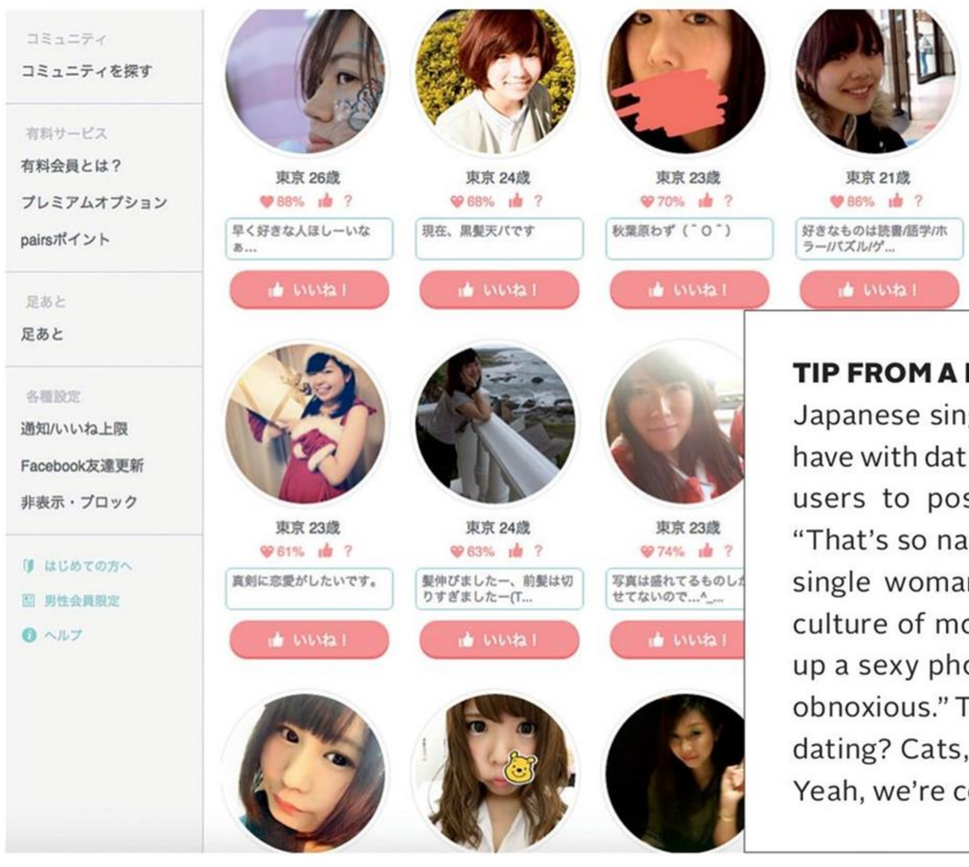
JAPAN

Getting on the Scene

Japan is struggling through a romantic drought of historic proportions thanks to—get this—the popularity of dating-simulation games such as Konami's *LovePlus*. The number of people between the ages of 18 and 34 not involved in a romantic relationship with the opposite sex now stands at 61 percent for men and 49 percent for women. Thirty percent of men in their 20s and 30s have had no dating experience, according to one survey, and nearly a quarter of women called sex "bothersome" in another survey. Alas, instead of drawing on the latest technology to rekindle passion, young Japanese singles seem more interested in cuddle bars, soap massage parlors and masturbation aids. The sexual crisis is so dire that the Japanese government has introduced programs to encourage and even subsidize dating among the young and unattached. It's no wonder that, according to some reports, one in four Japanese women say they're still virgins at the age of 34.

Download This

An app called Pairs wants to rescue Japan from its sexual depression. As with Tinder, users sign up for Pairs through Facebook. "That gives it more credibility with young people," says Kumiko Endo, a Japanese American sociologist at the New School whose doctoral dissertation is about dating in Japan. "People feel they can trust it." They need to, because Pairs asks for some very personal and unorthodox information. It has specifications for body shape (from somewhat thin to rather thick), blood type, birthplace, profession, highest degree, nonwork days and alcohol consumption. "I had to laugh when I saw the blood-type question," Endo says, "because we are firm believers in blood-type compatibility. That is quintessentially Japanese." Pairs is free for women but requires men to pay a modest membership fee, and the app's digital marketplace seems to play into the country's current obsession with virtual romance. Users must purchase virtual coins to buy and send "like" messages to people they find attractive. If a "like" is reciprocated, senders can then exchange messages. That protects both parties, and it's comforting to women who may avoid online dating sites because they fear getting notes from creepy men. "Only your initials appear in the profile," explains Endo. "Japanese people still fear that their friends and co-workers will find out they're trying to meet someone online. We have a hard time getting over our traditions. The stigma around internet dating is still strong."



TIP FROM A LOCAL

Japanese singles say one big problem they have with dating sites is that they encourage users to post flattering profile pictures. "That's so narcissistic," says one attractive single woman in her early 30s. "This is a culture of modesty and honor, and putting up a sexy photo of yourself is boastful and obnoxious." The preferred photos for online dating? Cats, street signs and rice cookers. Yeah, we're confused too.

"PUTTING UP A SEXY PHOTO OF YOURSELF IS BOASTFUL AND OBNOXIOUS."

A Beautiful Country

An American contractor finds his new job isn't what he signed up for when things go from bad to worse in an Afghanistan desert

ILLUSTRATION BY JENNIE WEBBER

Z steers with one hand. The other he uses to eat the chicken. For quite a while now, as far as Healy has been able to discern, the nest of old newspaper balanced on the console between their seats has accommodated bone and gristle, nothing more. Still, Z keeps finding bits to lower into his mouth. He lowers them, thinks Healy, as if he's both the baby and the mama bird. ¶ "I love chicken," Z says. ¶ "I see that," Healy says. ¶ Z shrugs, rolls down his window an inch or two, and then, guiding the wheel with his knee, forces the glass the rest of the way, with both hands, like a climber hauling himself over a wall. When he flings the carcass to the wind, the newspaper bursts open

and a long string of juice whips back inside the car. Z frowns at the stain on his tunic. "Look at this," he says. He nods at the glove box. "In there."

Among the clutter, Healy finds some loose Kleenex, but when he offers it to Z, Z makes a face. "No, brother. The cigarettes."

Drab chaparral flows by. Here and there a compound stands, a truck is broken down, a driver squats in a ditch to piss. On more than one occasion, Healy has heard white men and women call this country beautiful. Observing the scenery, he considers how he himself might respond if called upon to describe it. It looks like God took a shit on a rock pile, he decides, and then God kicked down the rock pile.

BY **LUKE MOGELSON**

"I thought all soldiers smoked," Z says.

"I'm not a soldier," Healy says.

"But you were in the Army," Z says.

"A long time ago," Healy says.

Z asks, "Did you know Captain Todd?"

"Who's that?"

"Captain Todd."

"I don't think so," Healy says.

"He was in the Army."

"It's a big place."

"Were you Special Forces?"

"No."

"Captain Todd was Special Forces," Z says.

Soon they are in the city. Healy seeks out the gaze of random citizens, testing the efficacy of his disguise. Earlier, at the airport, after watching the other Westerner who'd been on the plane with him get into an armored SUV escorted by hulking mercenaries with flak jackets and assault rifles, Healy was surprised when Z offered him the prayer cap, the neatly folded robes and the camel-hair shawl. He was surprised when Z led him past the VIP parking lot to the scrum of local taxis, rickshaws and this ridiculous Corolla. And he was surprised, yet again, when Z told him that his weapon would be issued at the base; until then they would be traveling unarmed.

That was three of them, surprises, before they'd even started. Now Z says, "We have to make a stop," and pulls alongside a long row of blast wall.

"What for?" Healy says.

"It won't take long."

A heavy steel bar and two policemen with Kalashnikovs guard the entrance. One of the policemen approaches the driver's side and Z has to repeat the project of getting the window down. After a brief exchange, none of which Healy understands, the policeman beckons his comrade, who inspects the undercarriage

of the Corolla with a convex mirror attached at an angle to a wooden pole: a giant version of the molar-checking tool dentists use.

The first policeman lets up the bar on a rope.

"What is this place?" asks Healy.

"Stay here," Z says. He parks and disappears into a tall office building with a turquoise glass facade.

While he waits, Healy tells himself once more what he told himself at the airport and on the plane and in the small Mediterranean city where he'd been staying for reasons he cannot adequately recall before he came here: Go home.

Z emerges from the building with a black duffel bag on his shoulder. It looks heavy. He has to twist at the waist to swing it into the trunk. When he gets back in the car, Healy asks him, "What's in the bag?"

"That one?"

"Yes."

"Two hundred thousand dollars."

Healy looks at him. "What's in the bag?"

"I just told you."

Healy gets out, goes to the rear of the Corolla and opens the trunk. The duffel is stowed underneath the floor panel, wedged into the cavity where the spare tire and the jack should be. Indeed, it contains a large amount of local currency bundled into equal stacks with rubber bands.

Back at the passenger-side door, Healy bends down and says, "Feel like telling me what the fuck is going on here?"

"Salaries," Z says. "For the guys at the base."

"That's not in my contract."

"It's part of the job."

"Not my job."

"No?"

Healy quotes from his contract. Then he says, "Transportation of large cash sums through enemy territory in a shit-bucket Toyota without escort or protective equipment or sidearm or, hell, I don't fucking know, a knife? Not my job."

"You don't like my car?" Z says.

Healy straightens. He props his elbows on the Toyota's hot metal roof. All around him, bullet marks crater the blast wall. The concrete partitions were likely moved here from another location, where they had faced the opposite way. The marks on the inside of the barriers give Healy an uneasy feeling. It's as if someone tried to force his way out of, rather than into, the compound—as if the walls are protecting the world beyond them rather than the space that they enclose.

After a while, Z calls to him. "Should I bring you back to the airport?"

• • •

He cannot even say when it was, exactly, that he stopped going home between jobs. His apartment in the small Mediterranean city sits on the top floor of a four-story complex, midway up a steep hill. A strip of brass trim separates the orange carpet of his sleeping area from the warped hardwood of his kitchen area. He spends most of his time in the kitchen area, at a table abutting a window that looks out on what was advertised when he first rented the place as "expensive ocean views"—a translation error that happened to be more accurate than the intended "expansive." For Healy, anyway, the view was less a selling point than the small, family-run grocery that occupies the ground floor. Previous tenants had established a system. You placed a list and some money in a basket; you lowered the basket by rope to the street; you hoisted the basket up with the items. Of this, perhaps, at times, Healy takes excessive advantage. Days exist when the prospect of human interaction is so odious that he waits for the grocer to show his back, hurries past him up the stairs and lowers down his list.

Weekends, on the streets below, protesters with bandannas tied around their faces erect potted-plant barricades, start fires, smash stuff. Police in riot gear advance in phalanxes, knocking people over with high-pressure water cannons. They send canisters of tear gas somersaulting down the sidewalk. The white, noxious clouds reach Healy's window, seep through the cracked glazing and the rotted frame, pollute his kitchen and sleeping areas. Even in the bathroom, a towel stuffed beneath the door, Healy's eyes used to ache and he'd retch into the sink. (The bathroom's is the only sink in the apartment and therefore not only the repository for spat toothpaste and beard trimmings but also baklava-begrimed plates, coffee grounds and bowls of soggy muesli.) After his first stay, Healy bought a gas mask at the bazaar, with circular eye windows and a hose like an elephant's trunk. Now, whenever the marchers are attacked, he stands at the open window, in his underwear, invincible.

Last he heard, his wife and two sons were living with Frank Boswell, of Boswell's Boots.

• • •

The evening sun, hued and magnified, is the mouth of a shaft they are hurtling down, into a fire. Every couple of miles, the charred wreckage of an ambushed fuel tanker lies on the roadside like the cabin of a jet plane after a supersonic crash. Otherwise, to the dun-colored sky, it is empty, dun-colored country, unblemished as a dun-colored sea. There are no checkpoints, no bases, no convoys, no war.

Z lights another cigarette and tells Healy that before joining the company he worked as an interpreter for a small Special Forces team led by Captain Todd. His eyes kindle. They dilate as if to admit more oxygen upon the flame.

"You wouldn't believe the stuff we did," he says. "If I told you, you wouldn't believe it."

"No," Healy says, "probably not."

After several minutes, Z says, "Those are his clothes you're wearing."

"Whose?"

"Captain Todd's."

• • •

About an hour west of the city, they encounter a grisly scene: what appears to have been a head-on collision between a station wagon and a small passenger bus. How such a catastrophe

"TRANSPORTING LARGE CASH SUMS THROUGH ENEMY TERRITORY WITHOUT ESCORT? NOT MY JOB."

could possibly have come to pass on this desolate road without bend is a mystery to Healy. Nonetheless, here they are: the long winding skid marks, the bus on its side, the wagon crumpled up, glass and metal everywhere. The smell of scorched tread still hangs in the air.

Z slows to negotiate the debris. Behind the overturned bus, people sit on the hardpan, nursing injuries. An old man holds a bloody hand over his eye; a young girl cradles an arm that looks like it has two elbows. A crowd huddles over something writhing. When they spot the Corolla, the less stunned among them gesture frantically for Z to stop.

Healy starts to say something.

"I know," Z says.

In the side mirror, Healy watches an elderly woman step into the middle of the road and beseech them to turn around. Arms extended, she looks like a signalman marshaling a helo. She stays there, signaling them, until distance reduces her to a shadow, to a smear, to nothing.

"Did you see that woman?" Healy says.

"Back there?" asks Z.

"Yes."

"With the bone sticking out?"

"No."

"Not with the bone sticking out?"

"Never mind."

• • •

Healy's wife and sons stand shoulder to shoulder; Frank Boswell kneels before them. Each of their socked feet is snugly planted in an old-fashioned measuring device, the stainless-steel kind with lines demarcating sizes and half sizes. Frank Boswell scoots from one foot to the next. He adjusts the bars and plates, ensures that their heels are firmly backed against the cup. Now and then, he lifts their arches to administer a playful tickle. Healy observes all of this surreptitiously, from a couple aisles over, while pretending to shop for himself. Eventually, his wife notices him, frowns and whispers something to Boswell. Then all four of them—Boswell, Healy's wife and Healy's two sons—turn their attention on Healy, visibly discomfited by the fact that he is watching them.

"Can I help you find something?" Frank Boswell says.

Healy looks away, focusing on the shelf in front of which he happens to be standing. To his surprise, instead of the new and fashionable Western-style footwear attractively displayed throughout the rest of the store, this shelf is crowded with Army-issue combat boots haphazardly heaped together. The rubber soles are worn smooth, laces frayed, seams parted. Mud still cakes the toes; stains splotch the beige nylon and the cowhide. Healy recognizes some of the darker splotches as blood. Realizing that he is barefoot, he begins to try some on. He tries one pair after another, digging through the endless pile. But none of them fit him; none of them are Healy's boots.

It's with a queasy start that he understands whose they are.

• • •

When he opens his eyes, Z is staring at him.

"You were doing this," Z says, and makes a whimpering sound. He laughs. "You see? Like this...." He does the whimpering again.

Healy rubs his face. By the time he checks the side mirror—half expecting to discover the old woman still there, signaling—it's too late.

The Hilux whips into the other lane, accelerates and pulls alongside them. Healy looks across Z, into the Hilux's cab, where a man with shoulder-length hair and black kohl around his eyes points a rifle out the window.

Z brakes and the Corolla jerks abruptly to a halt. The Hilux stops just ahead of them, perpendicular to the road. Now Healy sees that half a dozen men crowd the bed. They get up, adjusting robes, turbans, slung rifles and ammo vests bulky with spare magazines. One carries a grenade launcher on his back; another holds a light machine gun and wears the belts across his chest like bandoliers.

Z says, "No."

As three of the men approach the Corolla, Healy pulls Captain Todd's shawl tight around his face. One of the men, the one with the machine gun, stands at the front bumper, glaring at them through the windshield. The two others each take a side. They move with purpose, an irresistible momentum. In the Army, they had a term for that. The term was "violence of action."

THE MAN YANKS OPEN THE DOOR, GRABS A FISTFUL OF HEALY'S ROBES AND DRAGS HIM OUT.

The man who takes Healy's side has a funny sort of beard. It is mustacheless, Amish-style, and it is orange. Also, despite the temperature, the man wears a down ski suit and a wool cap. He yanks open the door, grabs a fistful of Healy's robes and drags him out. Healy drops to his knees.

The man pokes him with the muzzle of his Kalashnikov. He stabs the metal flash suppressor into Healy's sternum. Healy knows what the man wants. He wants Healy to look at him. That is what you do, after all, when you have the questions and the gun. You make him look at you.

Healy pitches forward and lands prostrate on the hardpan. He outflings his arms. From here he can see underneath the Corolla to the far side of the road. Z is on his knees with his hands cable-tied behind his back. One of the men stands before him. The man wears loafers, the heels of which are folded flat upon the insoles. Shoe-sandals, thinks Healy. The undercarriage of the Corolla cuts Z at the shoulders and the man at the waist. Healy sees beads of green coolant sweating from a hose. He feels microscopic life moving in the dust beneath him. He tastes his mouth. He smells the sun. He hears Z beg.

• • •

Every night, when he is at the apartment in the small Mediterranean city, Healy lowers down a little more money and hoists up a little more

FICTION

HEALY STEPS TO THE REAR OF THE COROLLA. WHAT HE SEES MAKES HIS INSIDES LURCH.

drink. The basket is not quite wide enough to accommodate a 750-milliliter bottle, and the grocer has to set it at an angle, its neck protruding. This means that the balance is off; Healy has to hoist with care. The grocer watches from below, in his hat and apron, hands on hips, head thrown back. Sometimes passersby stop. Everyone is waiting for the same thing. Everyone wants the explosion of glass. The feeling that Healy gets when instead the basket arrives safely at the window, when his fingers close around its wicker handle, when the grocer shakes his head and goes back inside and when the disappointed passersby continue on their travels—that feeling is by far the best part of Healy's day.

Once, he remembers, he told his wife that the war was not a war any longer, it was a racket. Like all rackets, Healy told his wife, it would end.

• • •

Feet move, doors slam, an engine starts, roars, fades away. By the time Healy rises, the truck is almost out of sight. Z bends over the front of the car, raking the cable tie against a sharp edge of bumper. He looks up at Healy. There is a nasty cut across his brow, the work of a buttstock.

"They knew about the money," Z says.

Healy points at the shawl. "You can thank Captain Todd for me."

Z stands. He has unmanacled his hands but still wears a plastic bracelet on each wrist.

"Captain Todd is dead," he says.

Healy shrugs and steps to the rear of the Corolla to close the trunk. What he sees when he gets there makes his insides lurch.

"No," he says.

He rips up the floor panel. There, wedged into the cavity where the spare tire and the jack should be, is the duffel with the cash.

"Z," Healy says.

When he closes the trunk, he finds Z sitting in the driver's seat—sideways, with his feet on the road. He stares blankly, Z, at the desert.

"They took the wrong one," Healy says. "They didn't take the cash. They took my bag. My bag with my ID. We need to go."

Z doesn't move.

"Hey," Healy says, stepping into Z's vacant gaze, clapping his hands. "We need to go."

"Can't," Z says.

"Can't?"

"They threw it."

"Threw what?"

"The key," says Z.

Healy leans into the car and checks.

"Okay," he says. "Okay. Threw it where?"

Still absorbed by the vast and darkening expanse, the expense, Z says, "Out there."

• • •

Never before has Healy appreciated the light's astonishing complexity at this hour. It's as if the shadows of the bushes are more tangled than the bushes. Still, he knows that what Z is doing—crawling around on his hands and knees, rooting through the sand—is wrong. One does not recognize the thing by looking at it. Resisting the impulse to focus, one lets the thing announce itself.

"What are you doing?" Z screams. Covered with sweat and earth, he stares up at Healy from the chaparral.

"You won't find it that way," Healy says.

Z doesn't hear. "What if they took it with them?"

"You said they threw it."

"But what if they didn't?"

"You said that's what you saw."

"There was a gun in my mouth."

"No," Healy says. "The key is here."

Z resumes digging through the sand a few moments longer, but then he gets up and joins Healy on the road. He points toward the city, an unreliable hallucination. "I'm going back to the crash," he says. "Those people might still be there. They'll help me. I can pretend to be one of them."

"They'll help you," Healy says. "You can pretend."

"I'll send someone for you."

"You'll send someone for me." The emotion in Healy's voice disturbs Healy. His instinct is to cite a line from his contract. He tries to summon a relevant provision, the appropriate clause.

Suddenly Z starts to jog away.

Healy watches him, stunned. He is a strong runner, Z. Soon Healy can barely hear the clap of his sandals on the asphalt. Then he can't hear anything at all.

• • •

Two hundred thousand dollars! Maybe that will be enough. In the incident report, Healy will say that the gunmen made off with both bags, and who in the company will doubt him, after the ordeal he has been through, the litigation he could bring?

He will go straight home—straight to Boswell's Boots. No more Mediterranean. No more hoisting up his liquor in a basket, standing at the window in his underwear and gas mask. To start with, a family vacation. Some remote and wooded place; somewhere by a river or a lake.

The sun has dropped away completely, and the temperature with it. Healy's eyes are tired. The chimerical hues of dusk will not stay put. In the distance a pale burn precedes the moon. Healy thinks he sees its glow catch something in the chaparral. He scrambles down and falls upon the object.

What he discovers is an old tank shell from many years and wars ago. Inscrutable writing is engraved across the copper. For a long time, Healy stares at it. When next he looks up, he finds a pair of headlights that are far away but getting closer. They approach from the wrong direction. They belong to a Hilux.

Yes, they will return there, to that beautiful country, every summer. Without question, there will have to be a river or a lake. That way, Healy can teach his sons to swim. And then, when they're older, he will teach them how to fish.

All he needs to do is find the key. ■

From These Heroic, Happy Dead, published April 26 by Tim Duggan Books.

2013
MIKE PERRY

M A Y F L

O W E R S
PHOTOGRAPHY BY
HENRIK PURIENNE
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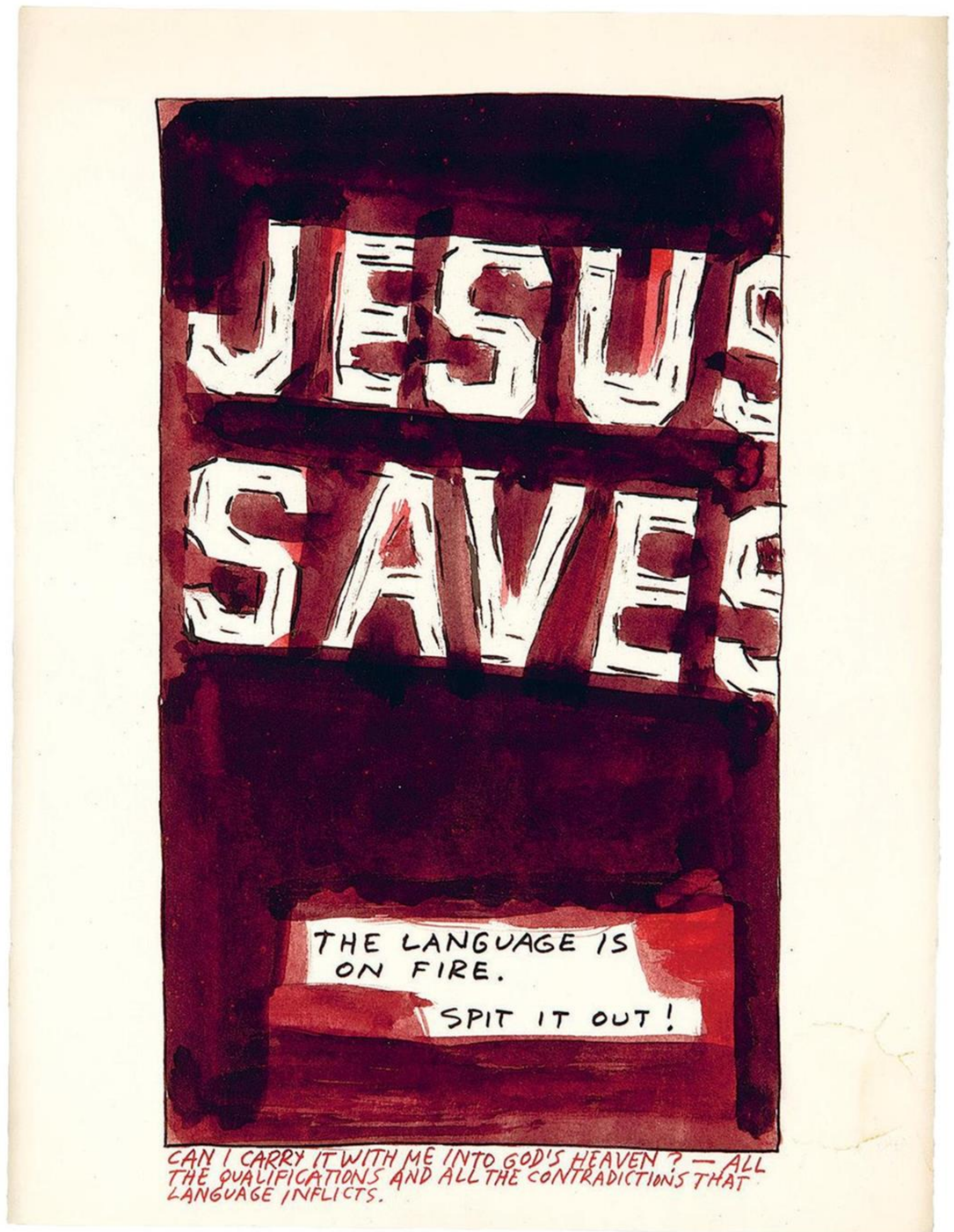
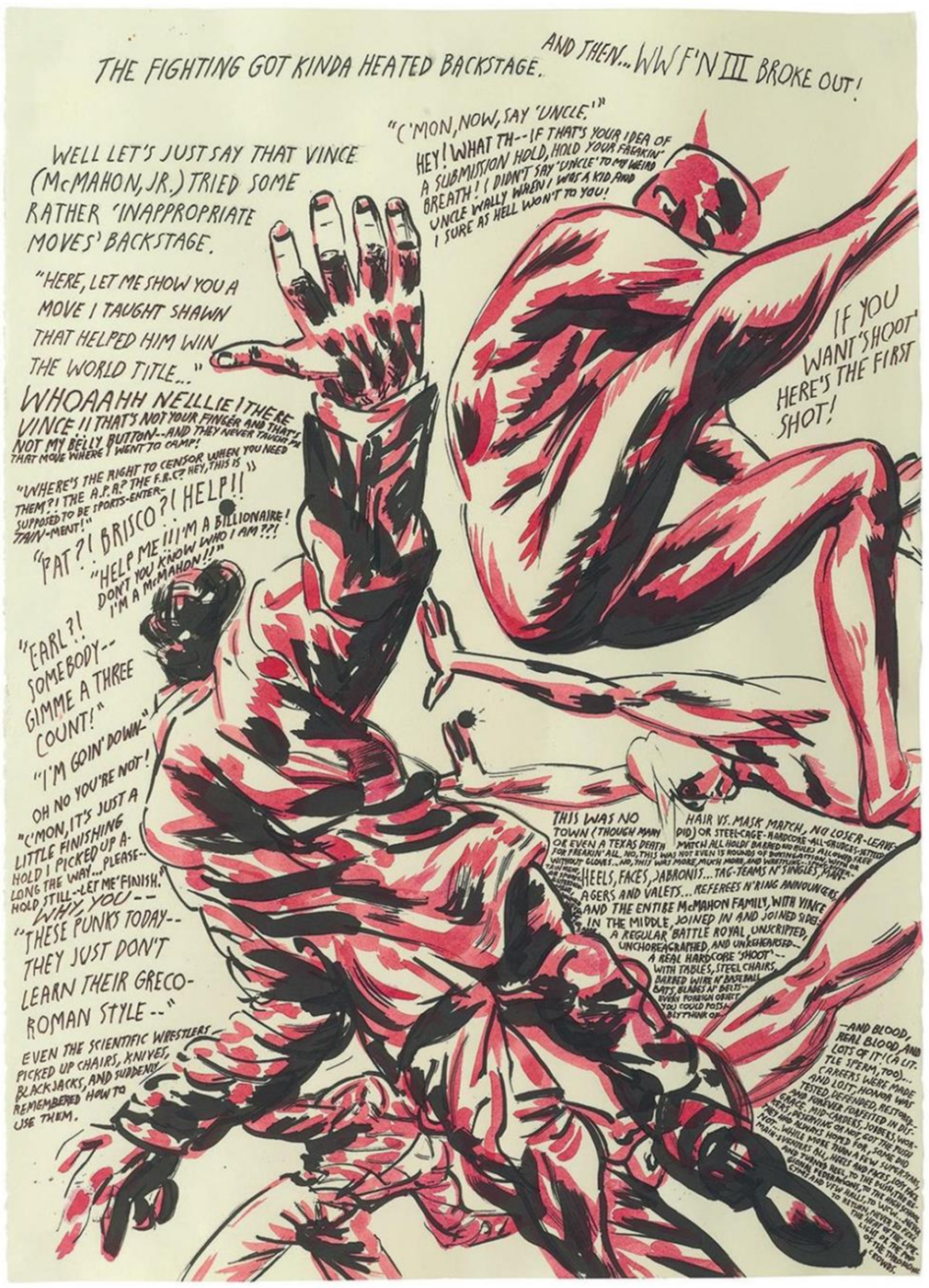


RAYMOND

Like many 1980s skate punks, I discovered Raymond Pettibon through his album covers, his flyers and, of course, his iconic Black Flag logo, which may be the most tattooed signifier of cool ever created. But I loved Pettibon's work beyond its association with a band or a subculture I cared about. I recognized his understanding of the figure and his restrained mark-making coupled with his amazing gift for lettering, all of which allowed him to transcend the labels of graphic artist, illustrator and comic book artist. He's a really smart guy who works quickly and gesturally but not sloppily. His work taught me



PETTIBON

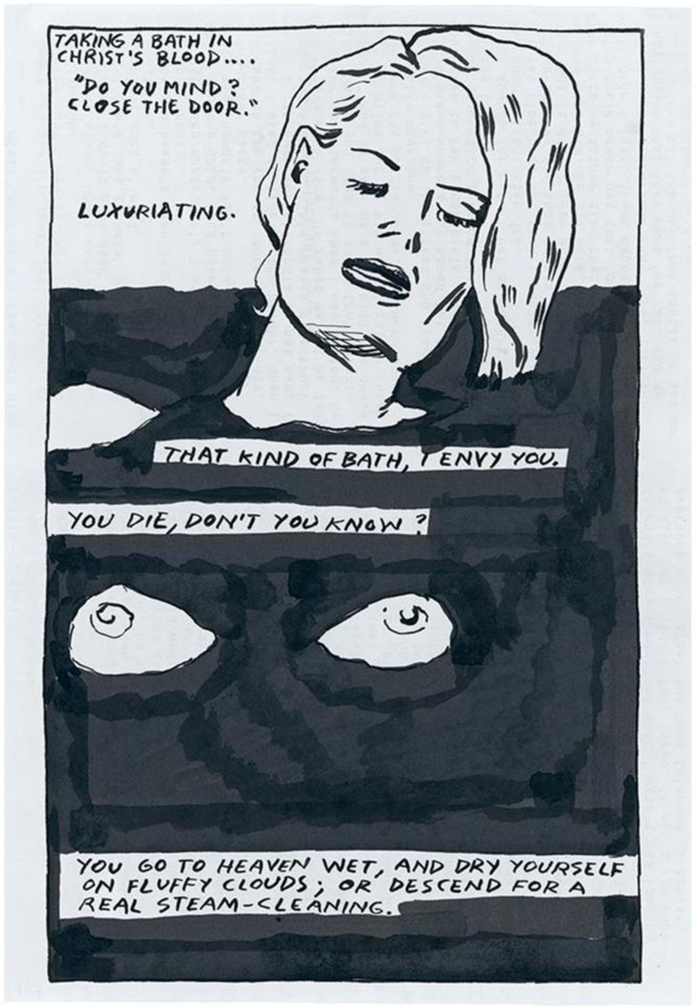
to present the most minimal but the strongest elements, to focus on what gives things their essence and power, and to be fearless. Pettibon thrives on challenging the status quo, and his art frequently contains symbols and insights that people find difficult to discuss—at least until someone else breaks the ice. You find this in comedy, whether it's Lenny Bruce or Dave Chappelle, but far less often in the art world. In many ways, Raymond Pettibon is a master of black comedy: His poetic imagery seduces you, and then it cracks you over the head.—Shepard Fairey

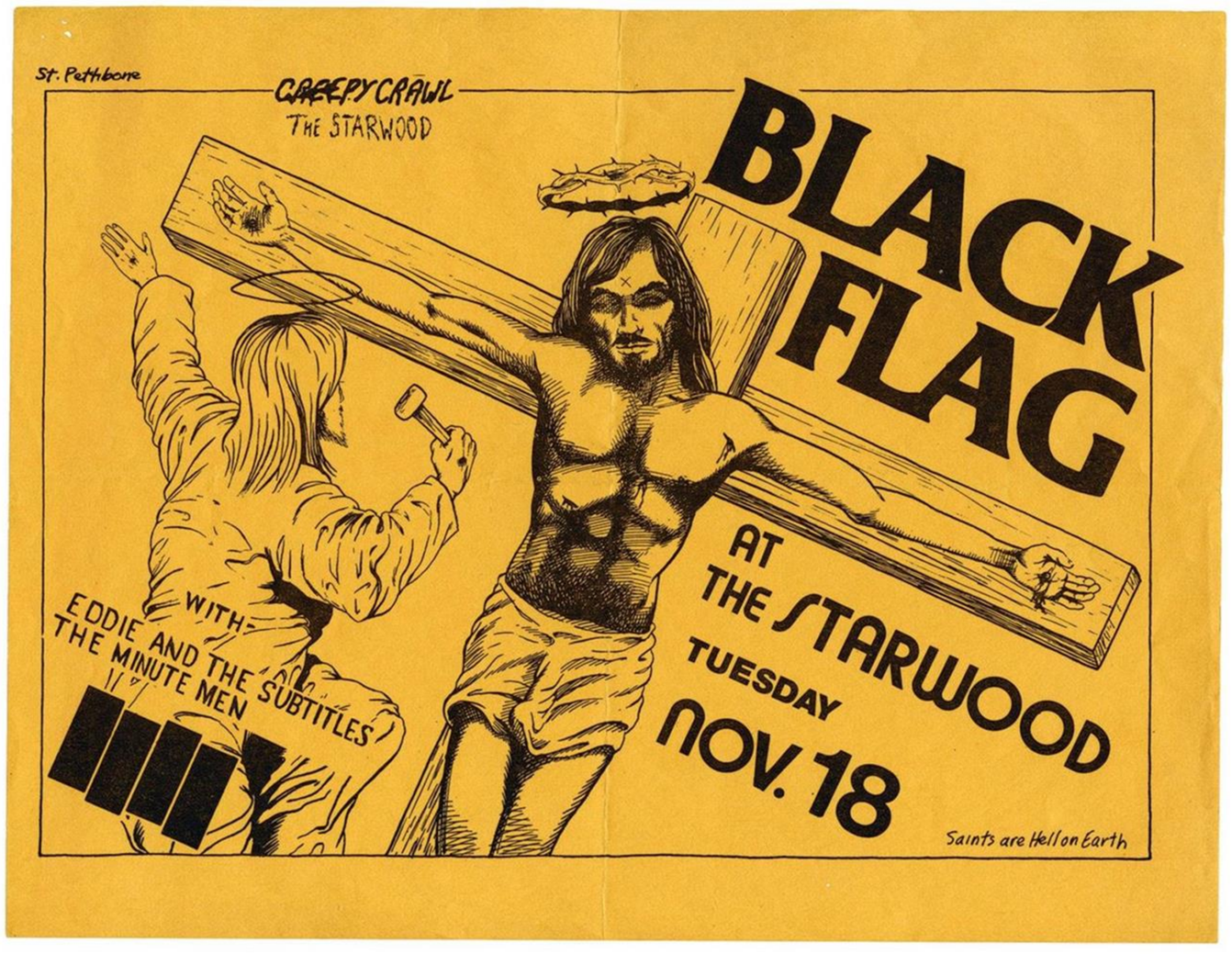
THE WAR, NOW THAT IT WAS OVER, SEEMED TO HAVE FLASHED BY TOO QUICKLY

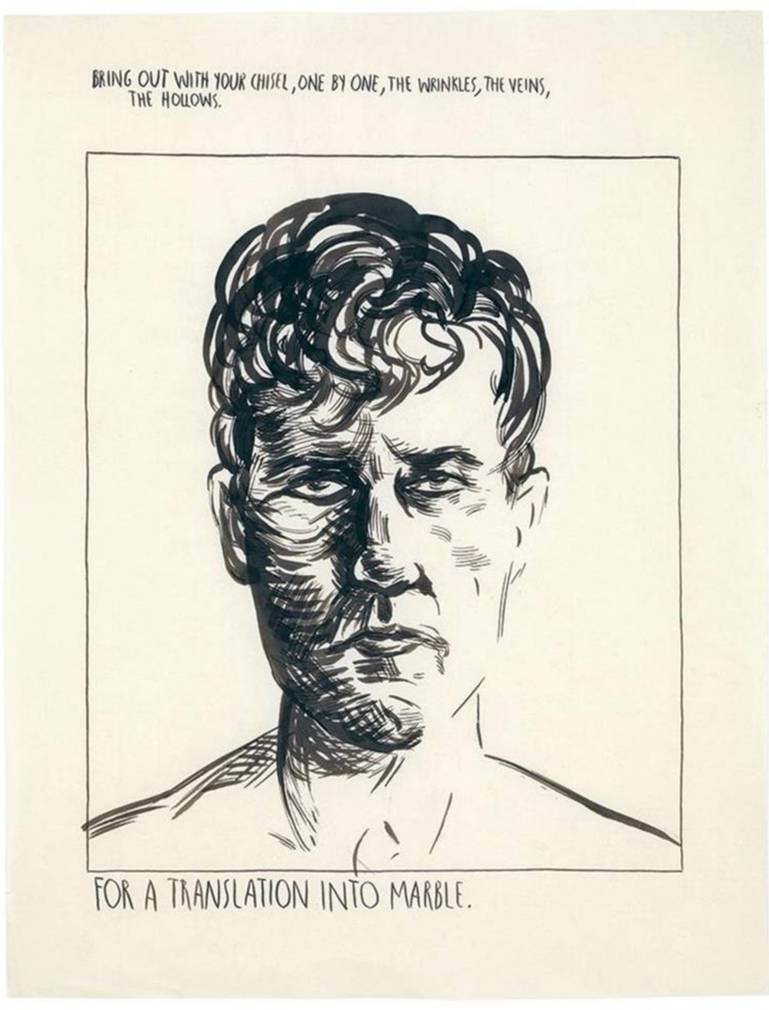
WHAT WOULD IT BE FOR HIM TO FALL BACK AND ENJOY THE HOMECOMING PARADE, AND THEN STAY CLOSE TO HIS LITTLE WHITE HOUSE, CULTIVATE HIS LITTLE ROSE GARDEN IN THE GREEN ZONE, AND WATCH ISRAEL ANNEX EDEN?

HE HAD NO DESIRE TO BE A WAR PRESIDENT WITH POOR REAGAN'S QUALIFICATIONS: GRENADA AND NOT MUCH ELSE. MOST OF ALL HE DID NOT WANT HIS COWARDLY FATHER'S LEGACY -- HE WHO LET THE LOSERS WALK IN HIS WAR WITH IRAQ -- TO BLACKEN HIS ALREADY TOO CLOSE NAME. A TRUE WAR PRESIDENT, HE WAS OUT OF HIS BUSH LEAGUE.

TO IMPRESS THE PRESS







Previous spread, from left: *No Title (Jesus saves. The...)*. Pen and ink on paper, 14 x 10½ inches, 1986. *No Title (The cards couldn't...)*. Pen and ink on paper, 11¼ x 7⅝ inches, 1992. *No Title (Whatever it is...)*. Pen and ink on paper, 18 x 12 inches, 1991. *No Title (The fighting got...)*. Pen and ink on paper, 30 x 22¼ inches, 2001. **Opposite:** *No Title (The war, now...)*. Pen, ink, gouache and acrylic on paper, 24 x 19 inches, 2008. **Top left:** *No Title (Taking a bath...)*. Pen and ink on paper, 11 x 8½ inches, 1986. **Top right:** *No Title (I have enlarged...)*. Pen, ink and gouache on paper, 18 x 24 inches, 2008. **Bottom left:** *Black Flag at the Starwood*. Offset print, 8½ x 11 inches, 1980. **Bottom right:** *No Title (Bring out with...)*. Pen and ink on paper, 22 x 17 inches, 1990.

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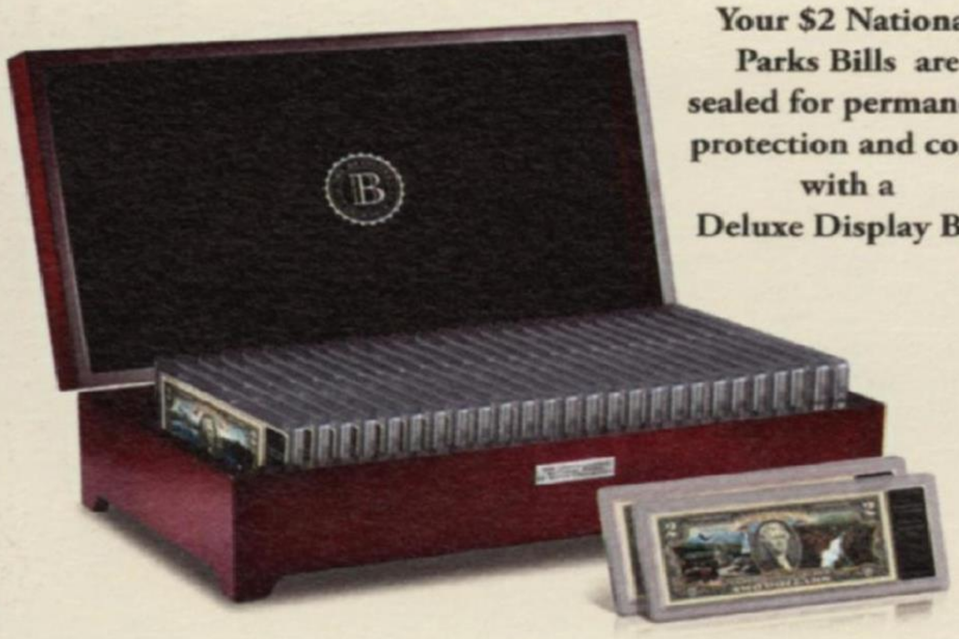

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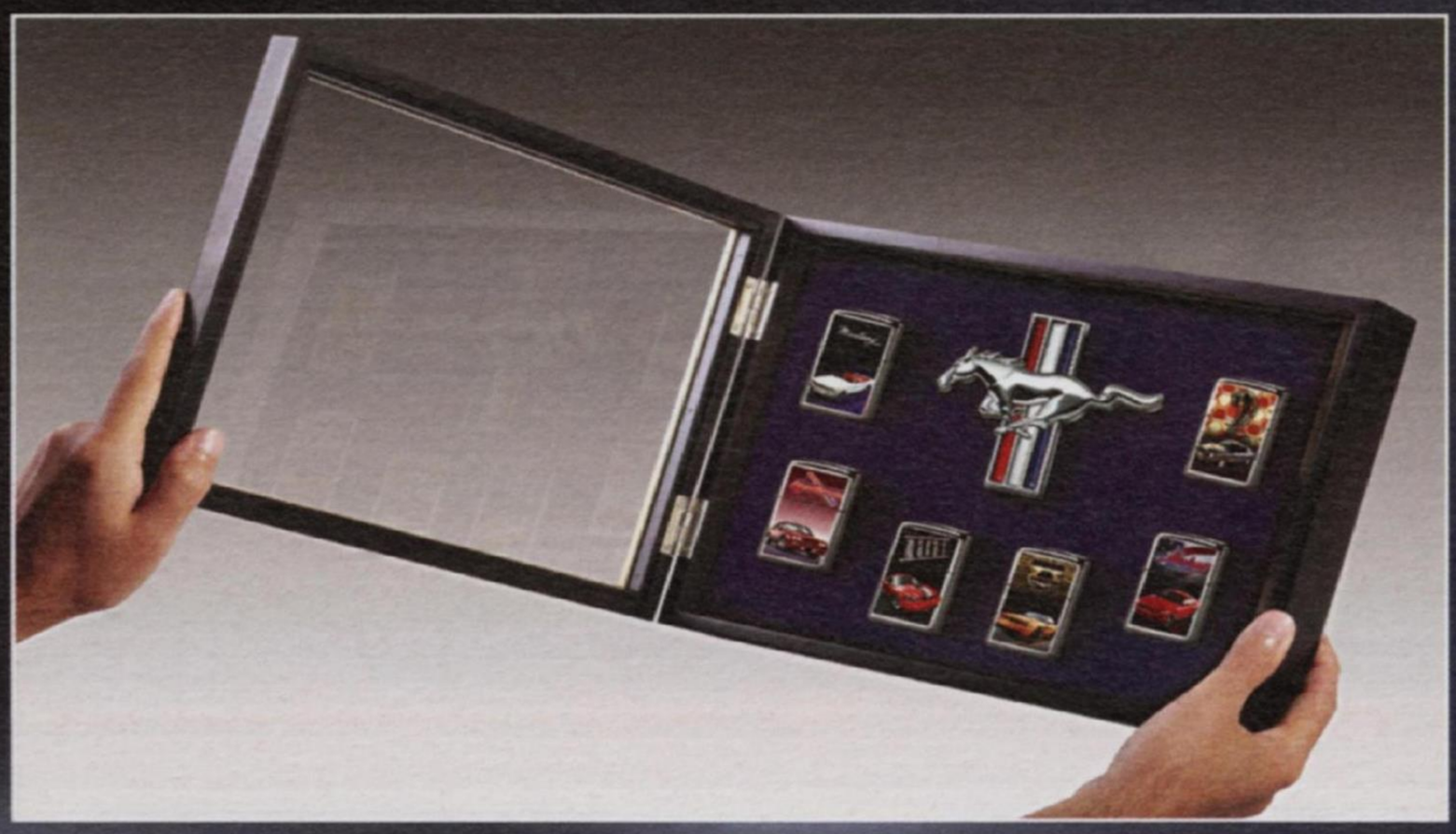

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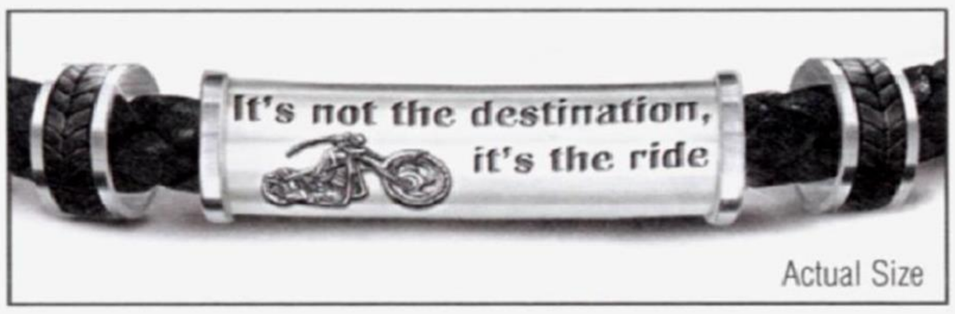

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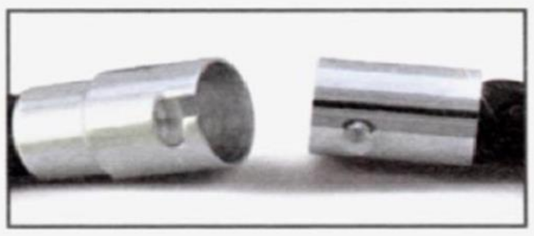

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With the roar of the engine, the rush of the wind, and miles and miles of open road to conquer, you could go on forever. And let's face it, for the true biker, it's not about the destination, it's all about the ride! Now, you can honor that biker's creed and gear up for your next ride in style, with a new custom jewelry exclusive—the *"Ride the Wind" Men's Bracelet*—available only from The Bradford Exchange.

GENUINE LEATHER, SOLID STAINLESS STEEL, AND A UNIQUE SCULPTED DESIGN

Superbly hand-crafted, this bold design features a braided genuine leather bracelet. At the center, a gleaming cylinder in biker-tough solid stainless steel showcases an impressive sculpted image of a custom bike and outstretched eagle wings in a burnished finish. The reverse side of the cylinder is finely etched with another ready-to-ride motorcycle, and the biker sentiment: *"It's not the destination, it's the ride"*. The cylinder is framed on each side by two stainless steel beads with black enamel motorcycle tire tread designs. Sized at 8½" to fit most wrists, the bracelet closes with a unique stainless steel magnetic clasp at the back, making it easy to put on or take off.

EXCEPTIONAL VALUE; SATISFACTION GUARANTEED

Each bracelet arrives in a jewelry pouch and presentation box, along with a Certificate of Authenticity. Available at just $79*, you can pay for it in 4 convenient installments of $19.75. To reserve yours, backed by our 120-day guarantee; send no money now. Just return the Reservation Application as possible, as this is a limited-time offer!

THE BRADFORD EXCHANGE

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OUR UNCONDITIONAL GUARANTEE

Because we believe in the exceptional quality of our jewelry, we back it with an unconditional, 120-day, money-back guarantee.

SIMPLY STATED:

If for any reason within 120 days of receipt of your jewelry, you wish to return it, we will refund the full purchase price—including tax, shipping, and service or replace it, no questions asked.

www.bradfordexchange.com/21534

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VODKA

RAISE YOUR GLASS.
RAISE YOUR GAME.

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